

## How to Be Good: Behaviour Management Policies in 36 Secondary Schools

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### **Abstract**

*How to be Good: behaviour management policies in 36 secondary schools*  
*Through the analysis of a representative sample of schools' behaviour management policies, we argue that there is a philosophical and tangible tension between the competing views on what ought to be the motivation and rationale for schools to promote good behaviour in England. Our research suggests that typical secondary schools usually opt to establish academic achievement as the moral principle upon which they seek to build a rationale for desired attitudes and behaviours in their pupils. We conclude with a recommendation for the adoption by schools of a more virtue-oriented approach to their behaviour management policies.*

**Keywords:** *behaviour problems, academic achievement, moral education, educational policy*

Towards the end of November 2013, an anonymous letter was sent to Birmingham City Council that purported to be an act of whistle-blowing uncovering a co-ordinated plot to take over a number of schools in Birmingham and to run them on strict Islamic principles. The whistle-blower included with their letter an extract of a document (later widely regarded as a hoax) that outlined a plot by a group of Muslims to oust head-teachers, governors, and senior staff from targeted schools through a co-ordinated campaign of destabilisation and professional attack. By the spring of 2014, the letter (which had come to be known as the 'Trojan Horse Letter') had been seen by the West Midlands Police Force, the Department for Education, Ofsted (the Government's auditing body for schools), and was also dominating the national media agenda. In April 2014, a new Education Commissioner (Peter Clarke) was appointed

and instructed by the Government to conduct an investigation into the ‘Trojan Horse’ allegations; his report was published in July 2014.

What Clarke found was that, irrespective of whether or not the ‘Trojan Horse’ letter was a hoax, there had indeed been ‘a determined effort to gain control of governing bodies at a small number of schools by people who are associated with each other’ and that ‘once in a position to do so, they have sought to introduce a distinct set of Islamic behaviours and religious practices’ (2014, p.10). He goes further in saying that he ‘found clear evidence that there are a number of people, associated with each other and in positions of influence in schools and governing bodies, who espouse, endorse or fail to challenge extremist views’ (p.12). These people, he concludes, have engaged in:

[...] co-ordinated, deliberate and sustained action [...] to introduce an intolerant and aggressive Islamic ethos into a few schools in Birmingham. This has been achieved by gaining influence on the governing bodies, installing sympathetic head-teachers or senior members of staff, appointing like-minded people to key positions, and seeking to remove head-teachers they do not feel to be sufficiently compliant (p.14).

As we write, Clarke’s report is still being digested by the British public and the political and educational establishments.

The research upon which we are reporting in this paper was largely conducted at the same time as the ‘Trojan Horse’ controversy was unfolding (although not directly inspired by it) and our questions for investigation parallel closely with the questions being currently hotly debated in Britain. Whilst this paper does not directly analyse the facts or fallout from this controversy, what will hopefully be seen is that the apparent motivations of those accused of perpetrating the attempted hostile takeover of schools was a perception that mainstream schools in England lack a moral narrative that can provide the school, its staff, and its children, with a moral telos at which all activity should be aimed at realising. To this end, we set ourselves the following broad research questions with which we could guide our investigation:

- What sort of values are written into schools’ behaviour management policies?
- What sorts of strategies are employed to transmit and embed those values?

We believe that our research context and focus will chime strongly with our readers wherever in the world they may be, since questions about the role of education as a tool for social change and as a counter to radicalisation and extremism appear to be almost ubiquitous in international discussion and debate about the mentoring and education of young people today.

As in previous controversies about a perceived decline in the moral fibre of young people (of which, more later), the ‘Trojan Horse’ affair in England, including Clarke’s report, has led to much discussion in politics, education, and the media about the role that schools play in developing young people’s behaviour and in instilling in them an ethos and a set of values that align with official conceptualisations of shared British values and identity. These official conceptualisations of ‘fundamental British values’ are identified in the Government’s Prevent strategy (2011), and are listed as including: ‘democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs’ (p.107). It is germane to note that the Prevent strategy is aimed at countering the perceived terrorist threat (under which politicians perceive Britain is currently living) by targeting those who are believed to be vulnerable to interpolation into religious fundamentalist and terrorist ideologies. However, there is a degree of irony to be detected in the reporting of, and reaction to, this ‘Trojan Horse’ case: the long-running debates about declines in the moral fibre of young people that predate the concerns about radical Islam have often advocated similar solutions and means to those adopted by the individuals involved in the infiltration of schools in Birmingham – we will discuss this issue at more length later in this paper.

Following this brief contextual introduction, the rest of our paper shall be taken up in providing an overview of government policy with respect to the requirement for schools to formulate, publish, and enforce a Behaviour Management Policy (henceforth simply referred to as a BMP). We will then outline the methods that we used in investigating our research questions (what sort of values are written into schools’ behaviour management policies, and what sorts of strategies are employed to transmit and embed those values?). This will be followed by a presentation of what we found having analysed a broadly representative sample of schools’ BMPs, and we will conclude with a discussion of those findings and a small number of recommendations that we believe will assist schools and policy makers in endeavouring to improve the lives of young people. Our main recommendation will (in very brief summary) be that there is much to be said in favour of schools adopting an approach to behaviour management that focuses on the character and virtues of the individual pupil rather than focussing on measurable outcomes such as academic success.

### **Schools’ behaviour management policies**

It is worthy of note that in the very same year as government formally took control of what pupils learned in school through the introduction of a national curriculum, it also publicly attempted to resolve the problem of indiscipline in schools. Many commentators on education in England see the years between 1976 and 1989 as a period of pivotal change in the way in which the education of children took place (see, for example: Matheson, 2015; Aldrich, 2006; Nunn, 2002). In 1976, the then Prime

Minister, Jim Callaghan, delivered a famous speech at Ruskin College which, it is said, launched the “Great Debate” on education that would ultimately culminate in the establishment of a national curriculum in 1988 (its roll-out commenced in 1989). Callaghan famously argued in his speech for the seizing of control of the school curriculum by Government from the hands of teachers who had, up to that point, in Government’s view, treated the curriculum as a secret garden into which none but the initiated could enter (Callaghan’s speech is sometimes called the “Secret Garden” speech, though he did not use that term in the speech itself). The culmination of the more than ten years’ work by governments and associated sub-committees that followed Callaghan’s speech in 1976 was the Education Reform Act (1988) through which a National Curriculum was first instituted.

In that same year in which the Government took control of the school curriculum, it also commissioned an official inquiry into indiscipline in schools. That report, officially entitled *Discipline in Schools* (Elton, 1989), but more commonly referred to as *The Elton Report* (named for the chair of its authoring committee), had the stated aim of identifying the actions needed in order ‘to secure the orderly atmosphere necessary in schools for effective teaching and learning to take place’ (p.55). Successive incarnations of education acts and reports and inquiries dealing with indiscipline appear to have incredibly strong genealogical ties with *The Elton Report*, since even the most recent acts and official reports identify that the main motivation for good discipline in schools is so that effective teaching and learning can take place. What is common in essentially all of these approaches and recommendations is that the behaviour for learning motivation is to provide the foundation for the development of policy: i.e. pupils should behave well so that they can learn more efficiently. Yet, what our research will show is that there is a rather strong tension between this policy heritage within which school approaches to discipline have usually operated and the new demands and motivations being placed upon schools with respect to the behaviour of pupils (as articulated in the fallout from the Trojan Horse affair).

There are quite a number of government reports and acts that are still current and which largely govern or influence official policy dealing with behaviour and discipline in schools. In chronological order, the most current and relevant are:

- Learning Behaviour (also known as *The Steer Report*) (2005)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Learning Behaviour: Lessons Learned (2009)
- Behaviour and the Role of Home-School Agreements (2010)
- HCEC Behaviour and Disciplines in Schools Report (2010-11)

On the whole, successive investigations have found few major incidents of antisocial behaviour in schools, despite media reports to the contrary; rather, teaching is impeded by ‘low-level disruption’ such as not being still or silent when the teacher speaks (e.g. Axup and Gersch, 2008.) As already stated, a common thread with respect to behaviour that links all of these reports and acts is the idea that the reason for promoting and enforcing good behaviour is so that effective learning can take place.

It is difficult to extract from the above reports the theoretical or conceptual foundations upon which their pronouncements and recommendations are established. What tends to be seen is that the authoring committees call for, and receive, input from stakeholders. They typically look for the way things currently are, they identify examples of what they consider to be good practice, and they recommend that more schools should do what the ‘successful’ schools are doing. In philosophical terms, this is the classic problem that derives from attempting to too quickly derive an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’. If we take the Steer Report and its 2009 follow-up as examples, what can be seen is the authoring committee identifying examples of good practice and new initiatives, for which they rely upon Ofsted assessments as evidence as well as stakeholder surveys, interviews, and focus groups, and then they present their recommendations based upon these. Schools are effectively presented with a menu of initiatives that have been successful elsewhere (most likely in different contexts) and then tasked with formulating their own synthesis of these. Their success, or not, will be established during their next Ofsted assessment.

The most tangible outcome of the above policy initiatives and acts is the legal requirement for schools to formulate, publish, and enforce a Behaviour Management Policy (BMP). So important is behaviour management on the UK Government’s agenda that Ofsted, the body charged with the power to inspect schools, specifically rates the effectiveness of behaviour management in the schools they inspect and the score awarded has a large impact upon the overall rating that a school will receive. Consequently, Ofsted pronouncements on behaviour management are greatly heeded by school leaders and managers, and, given that Ofsted appears primarily focussed upon academic achievement as the determiner of a school’s success or failure, it perhaps comes as no surprise that there is a direct causal link established by schools between good behaviour and academic achievement.

It is these BMPs that provide the data for our research, and what our analysis of them reveals is the theoretical and tangible tension between the competing views on what is the motivation and rationale for schools to promote good behaviour. Although this, at first, might appear to be an overly abstract argument, what we hope to demonstrate is that this inherent tension in education policy is manifestly debilitating and, ultimately,

possibly self-defeating. In the next section, we provide a theoretical framework within which we seek to understand the implications of these tensions between competing views on the motivations and rationales for schools to promote good behaviour. We then move on to provide an overview of our methods for selecting a data-sample that we believed would accurately represent the majority of BMPs in England.

### **Theoretical Framework**

From a moral philosophy perspective, the dominant discourse of the BMPs is consequentialist in nature. The Consequentialist strand of moral philosophy argues that ‘whatever values an individual or institutional agent adopts, the proper response to those values is to promote them [...] agents are required to produce whatever actions have the property of promoting a designated value, even actions that fail intuitively to honour it (Pettit, 1993, p.231). Put simply, this means that agents should do what it takes in order to promote or bring about the values or results that they have adopted (see also: Mendola, 2006; Kamm, 2005; Pettit, 1997). In the context of our research, it can be seen that many schools have, no doubt subconsciously, adopted this approach where, in their BMPs, they say that pupils ought to behave in certain ways (the called-for-means) because such behaviour will result in good learning and academic achievement (the hoped-for-ends). In other words, the means are justified by the ends.

Our argument in this research is that this sort of Consequentialist argumentation is unlikely to appeal to a significant proportion of a typical school’s population: experience alone tells us that there are many children who do not perceive learning and academic achievement as an obviously good thing, and this would, therefore, explode the Consequentialist argument of an end justifying the means through which that end is to be brought about. Indeed, there is undoubtedly a certain social capital to be earned in schools by those pupils who consciously opt-out of the race for good grades and who, as a logical consequence, will see no rationale for behaving in the ways that the school wishes.

A second strand of moral philosophy is the Non-Consequentialist, or Deontological strand. This strand of ethics is not as evident in the BMPs as is the Consequentialist, though it is clearly present as well. Deontology is a system of ethics that talks about prima-facie duties, constraints, and prerogatives and which establishes the rationale for good behaviour in the form of codes of rules: in simple terms, it argues that we ought to behave in a certain way because that is the way in which our rules prescribe how we should behave (see, for example: Gensler, 2012; Kamm, 2011). In the context of schools and pupil behaviour management, we feel (and it appears that the schools themselves see it in the same way) that such a rule-based rationale for good behaviour

is unlikely to appeal to the teenagers upon whom our research focuses. After all, teenage pupils are unlikely to behave in the way that teachers wish if the only rationale provided for such behaviour is that the rules (written by those self-same teachers) dictate that they ought...indeed, such a rationale is probably more likely to result in the exact opposite type of behaviour as that wished for.

It is generally accepted that there are three main strands of moral philosophy, and the final one of these, Virtue ethics, is the one that we are adopting as a way to frame and rationalise our conclusions and recommendations, principally because, as outlined above, the other two main strands appear unworkable in the secondary school context when it comes to either formulating or gaining acceptance (rationally) for a code of behaviour. This strand of moral philosophy seeks to rationalise the ‘good’ as being a concept that is defined relative to one’s specific context; as Hursthouse puts it, virtue ethics is different from the other strands of ethics because, instead of asking questions like ‘what sort of actions should I do?’ it asks ‘what sort of person should I be?’ (2001, p.25).

One of the most prominent contemporary Virtue ethicists is Alasdair MacIntyre. At the beginning of his seminal work, *After Virtue* (1981), MacIntyre argues that the modern condition is characterised by a loss in ability to comprehend the theory and practicalities of morality. He claims that, following the Enlightenment, the language of morality that we now use is no more than the ‘fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts of which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived’ and that, as a consequence, we can never rationally and convincingly argue why anyone ought to do anything (2007, p.2). What writers on virtue ethics like MacIntyre tend to propose (see also, for example: Carden, 2006; van Hooft, 2005; Hursthouse, 2001; Slote, 1997) in order to redress these moral-theory shortcomings is a reengagement with the virtue theories of pre-Enlightenment societies in order to rebuild the capacity to formulate compelling arguments about how we ought to be, act, and live. Clearly, if we adopt a virtue ethicist’s perspective, the way we ought to act and live is inherently dependent upon the type of virtues we possess (the type of person we are) and those we endeavour to acquire (the type of person we want to become) – and, in turn, these are dependent upon the jobs that we do or the social roles that we fulfil.

The concept of a virtue, for MacIntyre, ‘requires for its application the acceptance of some prior account of certain features of social and moral life, in terms of which it has to be defined and explained’ (2007, p.186). In relation to secondary school pupils, if we are to talk of the virtues then we need to establish a prior account of certain features of the social and moral life within which secondary education takes place. An account of these features, MacIntyre argues, provides the background against which

the concept of a virtue can become intelligible; the account takes the form of three stages that must ‘be identified in order if the core conception of a virtue is to be understood’ (p.186). The first of these stages concerns the notion of a practice, the second stage concerns the narrative order of a human life, and the third concerns an account of what constitutes a moral tradition (p.187).

Before engaging with the first of these stages, we need to pre-empt MacIntyre’s definition of a practice with a very brief discussion of two types of goods, or benefits, that an individual might accrue in their participation in a practice. The first types of goods are termed external goods, and these are ‘contingently attached to the practice’. Examples of this type of good might be ‘prestige, status and money’ (p.187) or, in the context of our research, something like good exam grades. MacIntyre states that ‘there are always alternate ways for achieving such goods, and their achievement is never to be had only by engaging in some particular kind of practice’ (p.188). Further, a specific feature of external goods is that, once they are achieved or acquired, they become ‘some individual’s property or possession’, and ‘the more someone has of them, the less there is for other people’ (p.190).

External goods, therefore, are ‘characteristically objects of competition in which there must be losers as well as winners’ (p.190). It is probably quite obvious to our readers that something like good exam grades, in and of themselves, would, under MacIntyre’s nomenclature, be most accurately identified as external goods. Exam grades, when considered in this light, have no direct or intrinsic relationship to the study of mathematics, or English, or History; an exam grade can be achieved through the study of art just as well as it can be achieved through the study of mathematics – thus, there is an extrinsic relationship between the subject of study and the exam grade.

Internal goods, on the other hand, are so termed for two reasons: first, because we can only specify them in the terms of the practice with which they are associated and by means of examples from that practice; and second, because ‘they can only be identified and recognized by the experience of participating in the practice in question’ (pp.188-9). It is characteristic of internal goods, in contrast to external goods, that ‘their achievement is a good for the whole community who participate in the practice’ and that when someone achieves these goods their supply is not diminished or exhausted (pp.189-90). In the context of the secondary school, then, the more highly-prized (in MacIntyre’s philosophy) internal goods would not be abstract exam grades, but would instead be some other concept or thing associated with the various practices in which the pupils, and indeed the wider school community, are engaged.

Having clarified the nature of the different types of goods, we can now say more about the nature of a practice, which MacIntyre famously defines as:

[...] any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative activity through which the goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve the standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended (2007, p.187).

What someone discovers within the pursuit of excellence in a practice 'is the good of a certain kind of life' (p.190) and to participate in a practice is to subject oneself to the authority of goods and standards belonging to that practice 'in such a way as to rule out all subjectivist and emotivist analyses and judgement' (p.190). Participation in a practice, according to MacIntyre, therefore, means that we subordinate 'ourselves within the practice in our relationship to other practitioners'. In order to do this 'we have to learn to recognize what is due to whom' and to 'take whatever self-endangering risks are demanded along the way'. We also 'have to listen carefully to what we are told about our own inadequacies and to reply with the same carefulness for facts'. In summary, if we wish to participate in a practice then we must accept 'the virtues of justice, courage and honesty' (p.191) as well as the virtue of 'a sense of the tradition to which one belongs or which confront one' (p.223).

For MacIntyre, a virtue 'is an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving any such goods' (p.191). Further, 'the virtues are those goods by reference to which, whether we like it or not, we define our relationship to those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards that inform our practices' (p.191).

So, consideration of the first of MacIntyre's stages in establishing a prior account of the milieu within which school education takes place gives us the concept of a practice with its dependent concepts of virtues which help practitioners (both pupils and teachers, in our case) identify and acquire the internal goods inherent in that practice. It seems to us that such a conceptualisation of education as a practice with specific and exclusive internal goods, with named virtues, the pursuit of which defines the very practice itself, is absent in the experience of most pupils (and, indeed, teachers). In a society like contemporary England, it seems unlikely that part of a pupil's ongoing induction into school life will include any sort of significant time devoted to a discussion of virtues or what type of goods their school role will allow them to acquire, and what external goods they should ignore or devalue.

The second of MacIntyre's stages for establishing the social and moral life of something like school education takes the form of an argument which states that narrative is 'the basic and essential genre for the characterization of human actions' (2007, p.208). It is the word 'characterization' that is of particular interest here because it points us to the core of MacIntyre's argument. If we can agree that narrative is the fundamental genre of our lives, our actions can only be understood when they are attributed to a particular character role. Just as actions in a fairy tale make most sense when attributed to a particular stock-character, so do human actions acquire most meaning when they are contextualised in a narrative sequence peopled with particular characters (Clough, 2002). A significant impediment to individuals acquiring the desired virtues and goods in their practice is, according to MacIntyre, the reluctance of modern society to see a human life as forming a whole:

Any contemporary attempt to envisage each human life as a whole, as a unity, whose character provides the virtues with an adequate telos encounters two different kinds of obstacle, one social and one philosophical. The social obstacles derive from the way in which modernity partitions each human life into a variety of segments, each with its own norms and modes of behaviour. So work is divided from leisure, private life from public, the corporate from the personal (2007, p.204).

Our society's desire to separate the public from the private and the working life from leisure time arguably means that our actions lose some of their meaning for both ourselves and the people with whom our life-narratives interweave (2007, pp.211-2): 'the current culture of bureaucratic individualism has no space for the understanding of a human life as a unity and, as a result, the tradition of the virtues has little or no place' (2007, p.225). The fractured and fragmented life-narratives that typify contemporary life in much of the world, and which are brought about by our desire to separate our lives into exclusive compartments, may be seen as part of the problem that we identify in school education. It is because the personal identity of the individual pupil is generally left unarticulated that the internal goods of the practice of school education often prove elusive.

To narrate, of course, requires an ability to view the world and one's place within it with a degree of objectivity, and, MacIntyre argues, it is because of this that contemporary society, with its predisposition for subjectivity and individualism, is uncomfortable with the idea of narration. It is this contemporary suspicion of objectivity that prevents society from being able to articulate statements about good and bad:

The presupposition of this objectivity is of course that we can understand the notion of ‘good for X’ and cognate notions in terms of some conception of the unity of X’s life. What is better or worse for X depends upon the character of that intelligible narrative which provides X’s life with its unity. Unsurprisingly, it is the lack of any such unifying conception of a human life which underlies modern denials of the factual character of moral judgements and more especially of those judgements which ascribe virtues or vices to individuals (2007, p.225).

Without narrative unity there are no subjects ‘of whom stories could be told’ (2007, p.218), and without subjects there is neither the possibility of understanding actions nor the possibility of identifying the good life qua school pupil, teacher, or whatever role it happens to be.

We shall return to the implications of these problems that the philosophers of virtue, such as MacIntyre, identify. Before then, however, we must establish the methods through which we sought to gather and analyse the data to which we would apply these philosophical concepts.

## **Methods**

In the section above on schools’ behaviour management policies, we pointed out that the main government reports focussing upon this area seem largely to elide any significant discussion of a theoretical or conceptual foundation for their recommendations or conclusions. Going all the way back to the Elton Report of 1989, a common approach is a focus upon surveys of opinions from stakeholders, follow-up interviews and focus groups, a collection of examples of perceived good practice, and then a distillation of all of this down to a set of recommendations. There does not appear to be a preponderance of theoretical or conceptual discussion upon which, or from which, those recommendations are established. Consequently, as we explored this field, there was an apparent absence of an identifiable theory, or theories, that we could critique or test. This absence of a clear shared theory in this field suggested to us a research paradigm that anticipated just such a scenario and whose design was aimed at providing or pointing towards the possibility of a theory.

Grounded Theory (GT) was first developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in order to address a problem in social science research, which was that researchers were often faced with trying to understand a phenomenon about which no pre-existing theory or concepts existed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp.1-6; also, see Ong, 2012). In the traditional sciences, the researcher is often pre-armed with hypotheses and theories when faced with a phenomenon and then devises experiments in order to gather and analyse data that will either prove or disprove the theory. However, as already stated, our own research indicated that behaviour policies had not been investigated to

identify what behaviours were being promoted or the rationale for promoting those behaviours. Consequently, there was no identifiable hypothesis with which to work. This required us to undertake the role of the social researcher who is faced with trying to explain phenomena that are not testable (for a variety of reasons) using the traditional experimental research paradigm (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp.1-2; also, see Bowen, 2006). Instead, what must be done in the absence of pre-existing theories, according to Glaser and Strauss, is that data must be first gathered and rigorously analysed through a process of comparative analysis, and, from this analysis of data, a theory is generated. In that sense, GT is the inverse of the traditional research paradigm (for a much fuller account of the development of GT and its subsequent evolution in different directions following the professional parting of Glaser and Strauss, see, for example: Uri, 2015; Ralph et al, 2015; also, for a discussion of the limitations of GT in policy research, see Richards & Farrokhnia, 2016).

In the case of our own research into schools' behaviour policies, there are no pre-existing conceptual theories to our knowledge about why they take the form that they do or about the frameworks upon which they are built. This reflects the reports and governmental guidance that do exist to support school governors and staff in the writing of these policies, but not the wider underpinning rationale for their development. Therefore, we decided to immerse ourselves in the reading of many different examples of behaviour policies and to constantly compare and cross-reference each example with all of the others that we were reading.

From this inductive process (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p.15), we were able to build gradually a group of common features and, eventually, to crystallise these recurring features into concepts that would allow us eventually to formulate an overarching view, or theory, about these policies. It is this robust identification of the core concepts that lie behind the phenomenon being researched that is of most importance since, as Strauss and Corbin point out (1998, p.168), 'theory consists of plausible relationships proposed among concepts and sets of concepts'. Once we had read a number of different examples of schools' behaviour policies and we were able to begin clustering groups of recurring features into concepts, we needed to decide how big our data set actually ought to be.

### Data Sampling

The general advice in the methodological literature is that the data sample is complete when no new concepts emerge from the ongoing process of data collection and analysis [see, for example: Urquhart, 2013; Charmaz, 2006; Strauss, 1987; Glaser & Strauss 1967]. In our case, we reached this point of data 'saturation' having read about

twelve to fifteen examples of policies. However, we decided to fortify our data set by considering the scope and depth of the data field with which we were dealing.

To do this, we established criteria that would help demonstrate the representativeness of our sample, selecting: a) secondary schools, since this is the shared background of the researchers and one which we understand; b) state-funded schools since these are the most common type and because doing so would remove potentially problematic variables such as the way in which fee-paying schools might differ in their pupil intake vis-a-vis state-funded schools; c) from across the Department for Education's nine regions of England to ensure a geographical spread; d) schools with student population at or around the median size of schools in each region so that our chosen schools were quite typical for the region; e) finally, we established the median rating of schools with respect to the number of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM).

With these criteria established, we used the Department for Education's School Census Data from January 2013<sup>i</sup>. We filtered the database for geographical region, then school phase type (secondary), then school funding (state). Next, we established the median school size and the median FSM rating for each region. This, in total, provided us with a sample of 36 schools that, we believe, accurately represents state-funded secondary schools from across all geographical regions and across the demographic spectrum although, bearing in mind the requirement for all BMPs to be reviewed annually, we cannot claim that this sample is currently generalizable to all Secondary schools. We then went to the website for each school and downloaded their behaviour management policy for analysis.

### Data Analysis

Having established the size of our data set, we utilised the data analysis and coding processes suggested by GT methodology (Urquhart, 2013; Charmaz, 2006). The four members of our research team each read a selection of BMPs, focussing especially on the rationales provided for them. We then each began, separately, to annotate them with codes that were descriptive of the underpinning reason for the development of the policy, e.g. Learning and Academic Achievement (LAA), Legislation (LEG), Citizenship (CIT). Gradually, through a process of triangulation, re-reading, and re-annotation, we were able to begin to conflate individual descriptive codes under umbrella terms that were more overarching in their scope and more abstract in their reference (see Appendix 1 for our table of codings).

These umbrella terms gradually crystallised into concepts that we then further grouped into categories, which would finally go towards the formulation of an overarching analysis of these BMPs. Whilst this is not exactly the process called for in perfect

examples of Ground Theory research, we argue that it does establish our research approach as one informed by Grounded Theory. Having generated a list of 15 codes, we then reviewed the policies again in order to identify which codes were the most common, using a simple tally system.

This approach showed how many policies used those core ideas, not how often core ideas were mentioned within policies. Thus, for example, we were able to identify that 34 of the 36 policies had identified that Learning and Academic Achievement was a consideration when providing a rationale for the BMP. Whilst this inevitably identifies a limitation to the research, or poses a legitimate question about its reliability, in that this only identifies the regularity of an idea, and not its relative importance within any individual document, the fact that it appears regularly across a number of behaviour policies does underline its importance across the whole educational system.

Indeed, the issue of reliability is always likely to arise in studies that adhere to, or are formed by the Grounded Theory approach. This is largely due to the fact that Grounded Theory is an abductive research paradigm, rather than the more traditionally deductive paradigms. What this means, according to Oktay (2012, p.17), is that it begins by using an inductive logic: the researcher begins to formulate a theory to explain what they are seeing in the data. Next, deductive logic is used by taking the emerging theory and seeing if it satisfactorily explains more examples from the data. This return to the data might necessitate a change to the theory, and therefore a further return to the data, and so on. Eventually, what is arrived at is a conclusion which appears a best fit in consideration of the data analysed, but which allows for the possibility of a need for further refinement should more data emerge.

Grounded Theory will almost certainly never satisfy those committed to the traditional deductive empirical paradigms. If reliability is defined as multiple exclusive researchers arriving at exactly the same conclusions when presented with the same data sets, then Ground Theory (informed) approaches are never likely to satisfy that test of reliability. There is always the possibility that different researchers will see, or choose to focus upon different patterns in the data, or to identify possible different causal relationships, and so on. They will almost certainly establish different labels for the concepts from which they will ultimately build their theory. However, a form of reliability that should emerge from Grounded Theory approaches is that the reader should be able to follow the logic of the researcher and to conclude that the emerging theory does indeed resolve the problems or tensions, or whatever it might be that the researchers were seeking to work upon. This brings us to the point where we are now in a position to present our findings.

## Findings

As a reminder, the broad research questions that we used to guide our research were as follows:

- What sort of values are written into schools' behaviour management policies?
- What sorts of strategies are employed to transmit and embed those values?

In what follows, we seek to present our findings with respect to those questions. The order in which we present our findings is determined by the frequency with which that idea or concept was present in the corpus of data. What will be seen is that there are quite significant similarities between the policies; we will present our own reflections upon these in the Discussion section which follows.

Of the 36 schools surveyed, 34 BMPs contained statements that provided reasons why pupils should behave in pro-social ways; two did not. Sometimes, such statements were presented in an introductory section to the policy, and sometimes they were integrated into the policy as a whole. The most common reasons for pro-social behaviour, present in more than half of the BMPs, are shown in Table 1; these are explained, below. Less common reasons included: the acceptance of responsibilities as a concomitant of being given rights; acting in accordance with moral values; enabling the smooth functioning of the school; protecting its good reputation; and obeying legislation. Less common reasons also included the development of pro-social behaviour as an aspect of citizenship and what we called the 'Feel good factor' – the notion that pro-social behaviour would lead to feelings of happiness and a good community spirit. The instances of these infrequently occurring reasons numbered in the single figures and are, therefore, not discussed in this paper.

### Good behaviour permits learning and academic development

The most frequent reasons for pro-social behaviour, mentioned in all the BMPs that contained any form of rationale at all, was to do with pupils' learning and academic achievement. A causal link between behaviour and learning was explicitly made in most of the schools' BMPs; indeed, some of the BMPs were explicitly labelled 'Behaviour for Learning' policies, and one school entitled their entire behaviour policy the 'Ready for Learning Policy'. Around half of the BMPs surveyed propose that learning is a direct consequence of good behaviour, for example:

- Good behaviour is essential if effective learning is to take place (school in the North East)
- Optimum teaching and learning can take place when behaviour is positive, and inappropriate behaviour is effectively managed (school in London)
- Good, responsible behaviour and discipline are essential for effective teaching and learning and important for promoting student success (school in the West Midlands)

Other BMPs presented a complementary view, albeit slightly different, that learning can be adversely affected by poor behaviour, for example:

- Good behaviour and full attendance make effective teaching and learning possible, while poor behaviour and irregular attendance disrupt these processes (school in the East Midlands)
- Any behaviour that spoils learning for anyone else must have consequences (school in the South West)
- Learning can be impeded by poor behaviour (school in the South East)

The ‘direct consequence’ view was also tempered or mediated in some BMPs which, following the rationale articulated in DfE (2012), presented good behaviour as essential to creating a safe and structured environment, which, in turn, is conducive to learning, for example:

- The promotion of a ‘Ready for Learning Policy’ reflects our pro-active attitude to behaviour management, creating a positive climate to allow all to succeed and fulfil their potential (school in the East of England)
- We are committed to ... maintaining a secure, calm and ordered environment in which youngsters can learn and teachers can teach safely and without disruption (school in the East Midlands)
- [...] the system aims to create conditions for an orderly community, in which effective learning can take place (school in London)

Common to all BMPs was a view that appropriate behaviour would lead to learning and achievement, whilst inappropriate behaviour would not. In this, the schools’ policies seem to be clearly and directly influenced by government policy (see, for example: DfE, 2015; DfE, 2014; DfE 2012)

### Good behaviour aids personal development

The second most common rationale evidenced in the BMPs for the promotion of pro-social behaviour, albeit much less common than learning and academic achievement, had to do with pupils’ personal development. BMP statements about personal development included statements about the self (self-esteem, self-discipline and independence), attitudes towards others (courtesy, respect and sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others) and care for the school and, sometimes, the wider environment. Statements about personal development were often linked to notions of success and achievement, although ‘achievement’ was sometimes presented as wider than only academic. The link between personal development and achievement was seen in statements relating to the self, for example:

- We aim to [...] provide every student with the knowledge, skills, self-belief and motivation to be successful in their learning and in their lives (school in the East of England)
- By the time students leave the college they will be [...] Resilient and independent learners with the skills to succeed in a rapidly changing world (school in London)
- Good, responsible behaviour and discipline are [...] important for promoting student success and self-esteem (school in the West Midlands)

In these statements, self-belief is linked to successful lives, independence with success in the world, and self-esteem with success. In the context of schools' BMPs, the argument seems to be that appropriate behaviour leads to self-esteem that, in turn, leads to success. Similar links were also apparent in statements relating to attitudes towards others, for example:

- All members of the school community should be able to achieve their best in [an] [...] environment, which encourages mutual respect and understanding (school in the North West)

A few BMPs contained statements relating to pupils' attitudes to the physical environment of the school (e.g. 'help keep my school looking tidy and put litter in the bin' (a school in the South West)) and one stated a desire to develop 'a social conscience and an environmental awareness' (school in London)). However, these statements were always presented below others that related to learning and, thus, presented care for the environment as subordinate to learning and academic success.

#### Good behaviour assists the development of good relationships

Half the policies specifically linked appropriate behaviour with the development of a school community, characterized by good relationships, for example:

- We will work actively to encourage good choices which promote outstanding learning and social interactions (school in the East Midlands)
- The aim of our behaviour policy is to create an environment where students may work purposefully, feel secure, happy and confident and where relationships between staff and students and between the students themselves are based on mutual respect and tolerance (school in the North East)

Respect was a recurring theme, whether referring to pupils' individual attitudes or to mutually-constituted relationships: twelve policies specifically mentioned respect and two also included reference to tolerance. Challenging bullying was also referred to in four policies, and the reason why it was not mentioned in more policies may be explained by the fact that most schools have an additional, specific, anti-bullying policy.

In many policies, good relationships, while desirable, were presented as subordinate to learning. In some, respect was seen as providing a foundation for learning, for example:

- Good behaviour is based on mutual respect and is fundamental in promoting a culture of high expectation and achievement (school in Yorkshire & Humberside)
- All members of the school are expected to help maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and development, with courtesy and mutual respect as the basic requirements (school in the South East)

In others, statements about good relationships were placed either underneath, or after, statements about learning, thus implying that good relationships are also subordinate to learning and achievement, for example:

- We expect all members of the school community to behave well, work hard, achieve high standards, show respect for one another and to ensure that [X] School is a positive and safe place to be (school in the South West)

#### Good behaviour ensures a safe environment

To a surprising extent, issues of safety were also linked to learning. Either safety was presented as a condition for learning, for example:

- We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere (school in the East of England)
- The school aims to provide a safe, secure, supportive environment where students can learn to the best of their ability, and where teachers can teach to the best of their ability (school in the East Midlands)

Or, matters of safety appeared below matters of learning on lists:

The school is a place where together all:

- Have the opportunity to achieve success every day
- Build the academic and social skills that are necessary for life in the adult world
- Follow the school rules to ensure a safe and relaxed working environment. (school in the North West)

#### Other discourses

It was possible to find other discourses in the BMPs. A few stated that behaviour learned at school would be applicable in adult life, not only in school. Some referred to a just and equitable community that the policy would help to create, and others referred to personal qualities that they hoped to develop in pupils, including

independence, creativity, and confidence. Importantly, five policies listed the values that they aimed to promote, for example:

- the school shows a strong moral purpose and code where co-operation, courtesy, kindness, tolerance, and understanding are demonstrated by and extended to all its members (school in the North West)
- We aim to develop a sense of true community spirit which will form the foundation for each individual's future in the wider community, and to do so in an overtly Christian environment, where Charity, Forgiveness, Use of Talents, Mutual Respect, and the Dignity of the Individual provide the impetus for all endeavour (school in the North East)
- The rules [...] support [the school's] moral values: treating others as we ourselves wish to be treated; developing personal integrity and honesty [...] promote self-discipline and the avoidance of all behaviour which is hurtful or disrespectful to others or infringes their rights (school in London)

However, such statements appeared infrequently in the corpus of BMPs that we surveyed, and often appeared underneath statements relating to academic achievement; they were often not prominent in the BMPs and, beyond the generally accepted value of respect, there was little agreement among the five schools as to the particular values they promoted.

## **Discussion**

The dominant discourse in English secondary schools, as revealed by these BMPs, is apparently consequentialist: viz, if you do X then Y will happen (or, in the context of BMPs in pupils behave in a pro-social way then they will learn). This finding accords with Ball et al. (2011) who found that behaviour policies in English secondary schools are subordinate to the imperative for high standards of learning and academic achievement. All the policies we surveyed linked pro-social behaviour with learning, and many linked it with success and achievement. When the policies offered other reasons for pro-social behaviour, they frequently linked these reasons in turn to academic success, or presented the other reasons as subordinate to the prime reason.

From some perspectives, the causal link between behaviour is not contentious, particularly in its tempered forms (poor behaviour impedes learning; good behaviour makes for an environment conducive to learning). According to the dominant discourse, if children behave in ways that are acceptable to the teacher, there are fewer disruptions to teaching and, hence, children will likely learn more. Nevertheless, this position can be critiqued; there are both practical and philosophical objections to it. First, those policies that describe good behaviours commonly include matters such as wearing the uniform correctly, being silent when asked, being obedient and not chewing gum. One policy includes the following list:

1. Get to lessons on time
2. Line up outside the classroom
3. Go in quietly and stand behind the seats
4. Greet our teacher politely
5. Wait to be asked to sit down
6. Answer our names politely when the register is called
7. Listen to the teacher and each other
8. Put our hands up to speak
9. Try our best at all times
10. Wait behind our chairs at the end of the lesson
11. Leave quietly (school in the East Midlands)

Lists such as this emphasise compliance and orderliness – valuable attributes in some circumstances, no doubt, but having little to do with learning (that is, beyond learning how to behave in schools). None of the surveyed BMPs mentioned behaviours which are more commonly considered necessary if learning is to take place – being curious, asking questions, posing counter-arguments, and so on (‘Try our best at all times’ emphasizes endeavour but not criticality). Such lists might provide for the uninterrupted transmission of information but, with the emphasis on compliance, are unlikely, in our view, to promote lively and committed inquiry.

Second, the link between behaviour and learning is rather instrumental: good behaviour is seen as leading to personal gain in terms of learning. This would be unproblematic if it could be assumed that children necessarily want to learn: in other words, if they accept and agree with the value of the type of learning that schools provide. But, for children who are essentially alienated from any aspect of this – aspects of the curriculum, pedagogy, and individual teachers – it provides no sound reason for behaving well. Further, the link between behaviour and learning might hold good during lessons but is unlikely to be helpful for recreational times – before and after lessons, and during breaks.

More importantly, if the purpose of behaving well is to enable learning, it is not clear why pupils should continue to behave well after they have left school. At best, the policy would seem to say to the child: ‘Behave well so that we can educate your classmates’ – which might seem scant motivation to a pupil who does not value this type of education. Finally, the correlation between good behaviour and learning might hold good in the general sense – many well-behaved children do learn – but it does not hold good in all cases because some well-behaved children do not achieve well and vice-versa. Ultimately, it seems to us that the proposition that good behaviour leads to learning is not true of all children; further, these policies suggest strongly that the only thing that matters in school is learning for the sake of achievement.

Because we have just spent so long discussing what might constitute good behaviour and why pupils or schools ought to do one thing or another, and in order to move towards a conclusion and to begin to theorise what it is that we have observed in our analysis of school behaviour policies, we can return to our discussion of the discipline of moral philosophy for robust concepts with which to frame our conclusions.

If we can recap: what we concluded in our theoretical framework section above is that, in order to provide the rationale and, consequently, the motivation for behaviour of a particular type and the establishment of certain goals at which a school community ought to aim, three steps or stages must be undertaken:

- 1) The practices in which the school community is engaged must be robustly established and articulated; this will allow for the identification of the virtues that those who wish to succeed or, indeed, excel in those practices must acquire; it will also allow for the internal goods of those practices to be defined and pursued
- 2) The narrative order of a human life within the tradition of the school community must be likewise robustly established and articulated: to understand the different roles that characters play in the narrative of the school community and its constituent practices is necessary if members are to discover what excellence would look like for them; resultantly, individualism must be subsumed by the sense of the community and its shared narrative
- 3) The resultant account of what will constitute the moral tradition of the school community that will be gained from steps 1) and 2) above will suggest an objective set of criteria against which performance and success can be objectively managed –the modern denial or reluctance to acknowledge the possibility of objectively ascribing virtues or vices to individuals must be confronted

In the context of schools' BMPs, therefore, MacIntyre's philosophy as it pertains to the identification of goods and goals towards which people ought to strive (and the identification of the virtues, the possession of which is necessary if those goods and goals are to be achievable) suggests that the majority of BMPs are unlikely to succeed in their stated aims. From our analysis of schools' BMPs, it appears as though schools consistently miss the opportunity to first establish a coherent and convincing narrative about school life from which they can determine the constituent practices and the required virtues necessary for success and into which they can induct their pupils. The combination of such a narrative and process of induction would, in our view, stand a much better chance of success because it will establish exam grades as external goods that will be achieved almost as a side-effect by those who have been properly inducted into the role of school pupil and whose pursuit is the acquisition of the internal goods associated with the internal practices of a school's daily life.

## Conclusion

Our research has shown that the overwhelming majority of a representative sample of typical secondary schools in England opts to establish academic achievement as the principle upon which they seek to build a moral rationale for the type of attitude and behaviour that they wish to foster in their pupils. We recognize that BMPs cannot tell us everything about the values a school transmits: schools in England also teach a form of moral education, either within Citizenship or Religious Education, or as part of a Personal, Social, Health and Economic programme (Formby et al., 2011). Nevertheless, the BMP sets the policy for everyday interactions both within and beyond lessons, so we can surmise that it plays a role in establishing a school's ethos. Indeed, even if we allow for the fact that moral education of the type we suggest is potentially taking place in other parts of a school's curriculum, then it begs the question as to why their behaviour policy seems to exist at a tangent to that curriculum strand.

The pragmatic nature of this principle within a school's ethos is unlikely to be effective in bringing about the types of attitude and behaviour for which schools so clearly strive. In formulating their Behaviour Management Policies, school managers might, in our view, take the opportunity to establish a set of clearly articulated principles as the core of their school's ethos and practices. Schools could do much worse, we suggest, than establishing as their core principles virtues that are simultaneously intrinsically associated with each subject that the pupils are studying (à la MacIntyre) whilst also being transferrable to other academic disciplines and life in general. For example, we would suggest that the instilling in pupils of the virtues of coherence of thought, respect for evidence, and an attitude of principled critique will provide a much firmer, because rationally justifiable, moral foundation for a school in relation to both its academic and its pastoral duties.

If we bring our discussion back to the 'Trojan Horse' case with which we opened this paper, it can hopefully be seen that what, in many ways, provided the opportunity for a hostile ideological takeover of schools was the absence of a coherent moral narrative that articulated the schools' position and goals. Disaffected teachers, parents, and community members, it seems, were motivated to intervene in schools that were, to their eyes, lacking any sort of moral ethos and were also failing in their duty to equip pupils with the education and skills necessary to succeed in examinations.

In a way, what those who attempted to infiltrate the schools were trying to do was something akin to our above summary of MacIntyre's philosophical position: they were attempting to establish a narrative of a school community that was founded upon a set of ethical principles (in this case, a particular strain of Muslim principles) the

adherence to which would not only produce good children (in the eyes of those involved in the project) but which would also, as a by-product, result in better academic outcomes as well. What we argue, therefore, is that if it is our desire, as a society, to establish a form of secular education that is not divorced from all moral statements through its conscious and political dissociation from all flavours of religion, then an excellent place to start would be with the virtues of inquiry we just mentioned above (coherence of thought, respect for evidence, and an attitude of principled critique). From these values, a coherent narrative of school and community life can be established, practices can be examined, roles identified, and associated virtues defined.

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## Appendix 1

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Policies (n=34)</b>
Learning and academic achievement	34
Personal Development	19
Relationships	17
Safety	17

Table 1: Reasons for pro-social behaviour

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2013>