

Community Cohesion: Useful Links for Schools



Institute of Community Cohesion

Why this pack?

From September 2007 all maintained schools have had a duty to promote community cohesion. In July 2007 the DCSF produced its Guidance on the Duty to Promote Community Cohesion. This Information Pack is intended to supplement that guidance by providing schools with advice on the wide range of resources and information that is available to help them discharge the new duty. A set of case studies is available separately on teachernet.gov.uk.

What is community cohesion?

A cohesive community is one in which

- There is a common vision and sense of belonging for all communities;
- The diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued;
- Similar life opportunities are available to all; and
- Strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

The Commission on Integration and Cohesion, whose report Our Shared Futures was published in June 2007 reinforced and developed this definition further by emphasising in particular, the need for cohesive communities to have

- A common vision: "a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country."
- A sense of belonging: a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities and a trust in institutions to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests
- Equality: tackling inequality and demonstrating fair treatment at all times

So what's new?

In many ways schools have been promoting community cohesion for years without necessarily describing their work in those terms. Striving for the best opportunities for all children irrespective of their backgrounds; exploring and respecting diversity; promoting tolerance and fairness will be at the heart of all good schools and there are many excellent examples to draw on. But the new duty recognises the growing importance of promoting cohesion for Britain in the early part of the 21st century and provides a stronger focus for work in schools and links with the wider community.

The Guidance highlighted three areas where schools can most contribute to community cohesion:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum
- Equity and excellence
- Engagement and extended services

This pack summarises some of the resources and information that is available to support work in each of these areas. It also sets how schools can work with, and demand support from, the local authority and other partners through Local Strategic Partnerships.

Teaching Learning and Curriculum

Promoting community cohesion through teaching, learning and the curriculum is clearly at the heart of the new duty. The Guidance describes this as “helping children and young people to learn to understand others, to value diversity whilst also promoting shared values, to promote awareness of human rights and to apply and defend them, and to develop the skills of participation and responsible action”

Many subjects, including Citizenship, RE, History and Geography have direct relevance to promoting community cohesion and the following links may be useful when considering the role of the curriculum in meeting the new duty.

[Diversity and Citizenship - Curriculum Review \(Ajegbo Report\) 2007](http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk)

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk>

Sir Keith Ajegbo and his colleagues undertook a review of the teaching of ethnic, religious and cultural diversity across the curriculum. Their report contains a wide-ranging review of the issues, many examples of good practice and links to potential resources, including those covering Black and Asian history and issues around culture, diversity and identity generally.

The Ajegbo report also recommended the development of a ‘fourth strand’ of Citizenship education entitled *Identity and Diversity: Living together in the UK*. The new strand was incorporated during a recent review of the entire secondary curriculum and will be taught for the first time in September 2008.

Following on from another of the report’s proposals the DCSF is working with the Royal Geographical Society and the Historical Association to develop resources and support for a week of activities around diversity and identity called *Who do We think We Are? Week*. The week is aimed at 5-16 year-olds and will be an opportunity for all schools to celebrate and explore the issues of identity, diversity and community. For secondary schools in particular, the week will also help to prepare students and

teachers for the new 'Identity and Diversity' strand of citizenship education being introduced in September 2008.

An appendix to the report also set out examples of how 'an enquiry, question orientated approach' might be developed for teachers to explore issues of contemporary political relevance in the UK drawing on relevant historical aspects. Questions include: What does 'Britishness' mean in a multinational state like the UK? What impact has migration had on the UK and should the UK pay compensation for the transatlantic slave trade?

Citizenship Foundation (CF) www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk

The Citizenship Foundation offers support and guidance to teachers on the delivery of citizenship education and how this can be developed across the Key Stages. It offers advice on

- Pedagogy and practice
- Teaching materials
- Case studies
- Training

The national programme of study for RE

<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/subjects/religious-education/index.aspx>

Religious Education is another area of the curriculum through which schools can promote issues of community cohesion. Ofsted states that RE, when taught well, can provide excellent opportunities for pupils to consider issues of community cohesion, diversity and religious understanding. Effective RE can also address the prejudices brought about by a shallow knowledge of world religions and provides pupils with a safe forum for the discussion of controversial issues.

The new national programme of study for RE, based on the non-statutory national framework, can help schools make appropriate links between RE and other subjects on key concepts such as diversity. It emphasises the relevance of RE to the overall curriculum aims, the Every Child Matters outcomes and personal development. Schools should use this programme of study as supporting guidance in the context of their local agreed syllabus or governors' policy.

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education

<http://www.natre.org.uk/>

NATRE is the subject teacher association for RE professionals in primary and secondary schools and higher education, providing a focal point for their concerns, a representative voice at national level and publications and courses to promote professional development.

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

www.qca.org.uk

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority also offers a range of advice and support material relevant to community cohesion. The website provides:

- Respect for All, an audit tool which provides a checklist to help schools and teachers assess their inclusion practice and make improvements
- Legislation and Guidance for teachers and schools on meeting the statutory requirements
- Subject case studies of good practice across all subjects and Key Stages.
- Resources highlights websites, books, guides, CD-ROMs and local authority initiatives that help schools promote diversity and raise pupils' achievements.

Learning and Skills Network www.lseducation.org.uk - We all came here from somewhere: diversities, identities and citizenship 2006

The Learning and Skills Network has produced a pack of support materials designed to be used with learners as part of a citizenship programme. The pack includes eight example activities to encourage debate about the concepts of 'identity', 'cultural identity' and 'national identity'.

Equity and Excellence

Striving to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential, irrespective of ethnic, socio-economic or other differences, is already a clear focus for schools and another important aspect of promoting community cohesion. However, the school census shows persistent differences in achievement: Chinese and Indian pupils tend to perform above average at GCSE, whereas, pupils of Black and Pakistani origin, or white working class boys, can often under perform. Also children from deprived backgrounds are three times less likely to achieve good outcomes at age 16, or continue into further and higher education, than their peers. The Government is committed to narrowing, and ultimately closing, the gap between the progress and attainment of children from different backgrounds and their peers.

Personalised Learning <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/personalisedlearning/>

This site sets out the Government's approach for raising standards and fulfilling the potential for all children, in underachieving groups, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds or the gifted and talented. Information is also available at:

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/>

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/>

Raising Achievement

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/

This site contains information on initiatives and policies to raise the achievement of ethnic minority pupils including:

Aiming High: Minority Ethnic Achievement Project (MEAP)

The Minority Ethnic Achievement Project (MEAP) provides targeted support for Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, and Turkish pupils at Key Stage 3 and 4. In 2007, 80 schools across 17 LAs participated in the project. The programme aims to develop effective teaching and learning approaches, building on recognised good practice; identify and transfer best practice in challenging Islamophobia and racism; ensure that the curriculum properly engages with the particular interests and concerns of Muslim pupils; and engage with parents and the wider Muslim community. This programme was the subject of a detailed internal evaluation in 2006 by the National Strategies and was found to be successful in ; leading to more effective support for minority ethnic pupils and more strategic use of Ethnic Minority Achievement resources; enabling schools to be more reflective on how minority ethnic learners are supported at whole school level; motivating pupils' attitudes and engagement in learning; improving communications between schools and parents; developing school confidence and capacity to make effective use of data; and developing teaching and learning approaches to address the needs of underperforming pupils.

Black Pupil's Achievement Programme

In 2003/04 DFES carried out its first major project to look specifically at the achievement of African-Caribbean boys. The project sought to test a range of strategies, across thirty schools, based on whole school solutions to raising achievement. A wider project was launched in October 2005 covering around 100 schools and 25 local authorities. Schools work with Regional Directors to carry out a whole school audit and develop an action plan. Specific support is provided to the school's senior and middle management including a bespoke programme from the National College of School Leadership.

Inclusion: Promoting inclusion and tackling underperformance. Key messages: ensuring the attainment of black Caribbean boys

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/keystage3/respub/ws_inc_bcb

This site sets out the key messages from the pilots and provides access to the materials used.

Another project aimed at eliminating variations in outcome targeted underachievement in white working class boys.

[Ensuring the attainment of White Working Class Boys in Writing, DFES 2005](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/ws_inc_wwcb)
http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/all/respub/ws_inc_wwcb

This project to aimed tackle underachievement in writing of boys in five London schools based on the Key Stage 3 Strategy. The conclusions were that there was no simple template or blueprint. Each of the schools adopted a different focus and success depended on ‘the quality of teaching, organisation, commitment determination and a supportive ethos in the school as a whole’

The Government Office for London has also supported projects in Southwark (‘Boys Beyond Bermondsey’) and Barking and Dagenham aimed at raising the aspirations and achievement of white boys from Year 9 upwards.

English as an additional language (EAL)

Nearly 700,000 pupils in English schools have one of 200 first languages other than English. Dealing effectively with pupils for whom English is an additional language is key to them achieving their potential.

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/

Provides links to publications and research on EAL and case studies.

New Arrivals Excellence Programme

The New Arrivals Excellence Programme (NAEP), launched in July 2007 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, is an initiative which the Primary and Secondary National Strategies are taking forward to build capacity in local authorities and schools to welcome pupils to school and offer the most effective provision for learning EAL. This will ensure they can access the curriculum as quickly as possible. NAEP offers advice, guidance and training as well as a comprehensive list of websites and resources for local authorities and schools

<http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/naep/>

Engagement and Extended Services

This is the area which is likely to be less familiar to schools than their work on curriculum or equity and excellence and which will benefit most from the involvement of local partners and other organisations.

The Guidance states that schools can promote community cohesion through their work to “provide reasonable means for children, young people, their friends and families to interact with people from different backgrounds and build positive

relations, including: links with different schools and communities; the provision of extended services; and opportunities for pupils, families and the wider community to take part in activities and receive services which build positive interaction and achievement for all groups”

It also highlights the fact that the work schools do in this area will vary, depending on their circumstances. “Different types of schools in different communities will clearly face different challenges and globalisation means both that the populations of schools are often more diverse, and that they might also change at fairly short notice. The staff and pupil populations of some schools reflect this diversity, allowing their pupils to mix with those from different backgrounds. Other schools, often by nature of their location, serve a predominantly monocultural population. As all children and young people can benefit from meaningful interaction, schools will need to consider how to give their pupils the opportunity to mix with and learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds, for example through links with other schools and community organisations.”

Linking schools

One of the principal conclusions of the ‘Cantle report’ Community cohesion, report of the independent review team, 2001 was that different ethnic communities in some areas were leading parallel lives with very little interaction across racial and religious boundaries. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion report, Our shared futures, 2007 also emphasised the importance of meaningful contact between people from different groups in breaking down stereotypes and prejudice. Many schools have established productive links with other schools locally, nationally and internationally. The Ajegbo report emphasised that ‘Such work between schools must have significant curriculum objectives and be incorporated into courses that pupils are studying. This will help avoid stereotyping and tokenism’

Schools Linking Network www.schoolslinkingnetwork.org.uk has been established to promote and support schools in setting up links to other schools across the country. A National Gateway has been set up on which schools looking for links are invited to register. Schools are then supported with free CPD and other resources. The website also contains information on the linking process, curriculum links and examples of successful linking.

Global gateway www.globalgateway.org.uk is run by the British Council to help schools in the UK to discover practical ways to use school partnerships to find out about the countries and cultures that have contributed to their country’s history, to work with other schools in the UK to explore identity and diversity in a global context and to promote community cohesion. The site gives examples of successful projects and also details of funding opportunities particularly for teacher visits.

- British Council School Linking Visits www.globalgateway.org.uk grants are available for a single teacher (or head teacher or support staff) from schools in England to visit a partner school and plan future joint curriculum projects. Last year around 80 visits were funded through the British Council and this

will probably increase for 2007-8. Visits to short-haul destinations include at least three days spent in the partner school; visits to long-haul destinations include at least five days in the partner school. The maximum grant for a European visit is £500. The maximum grant for a long haul visit is £1000. Car hire/taxi costs/ petrol cost/ airport car park fees will be considered on a case by case basis. Funding is awarded termly. The closing date for the next round is 1 February 2008.

- School determined TIPD visit <http://info.specialistschools.org.uk/tipd/sdp-aims.html> Through the Specialist Schools Trust funding is available for up to four teachers to visit an existing partner school, providing joint or collaborative projects have been undertaken for at least six months
- Specialist funds are also available to particular destinations www.globalgateway.org.uk

Extended services and community involvement

All schools should have a core offer of extended services developed by 2010. The content of this offer and the way it is developed through involving the wider community have a significant role to play in promoting community cohesion. There are many examples of good practice where schools have avoided insularity by inviting the wider community, faith leaders and others into the school.

Where neighbourhood management teams exist these provide an excellent opportunity for schools to make effective links with the local community. Neighbourhood management and extended services in and around schools www.neighbourhood.gov.uk gives case studies of how links with neighbourhood management teams can help schools to access the local community for support.

Being part of the bigger picture

Promoting community cohesion is not, by any means, just a concern of schools but a challenge for the whole community and a major issue for local authorities and their partners. There is much that schools can gain from and contribute to this wider activity by making full use of local structures and organisation.

- *Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)*. Each local area will have an LSP led and supported by the local authority (LA). The LSP brings together public, private, community and voluntary sector representatives in an overarching partnership within which other thematic partnerships, including the children's trust, can operate. The exact make up of the LSP will vary from area to area. The LSP will develop, monitor and review an overall plan for the area (which in the past may have been called a Community Strategy but will now be a Sustainable Community Strategy). It will also agree a Local Area Agreement

or delivery contract with Government and subsequently work towards achieving the targets set out in that agreement.

- *Sustainable Community Strategies* are prepared by LSPs setting out a long-term, sustainable vision in an area and acting as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the local area.
- *Community Cohesion Strategy*. Community cohesion issues should be an important strand of sustainable community strategies but many LSPs will also produce an explicit cohesion strategy setting out the collective aims and responsibilities for promoting cohesion.
- *Local Area Agreements (LAAs)* set out priorities agreed between central government and local government and its partners, via LSPs. LAAs were introduced in phases and have been adjusted at each phase so different areas will have different experiences with LAAs. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has now put LAAs on a statutory basis. New LAAs will be developed in 2008 in the light of the Act and new guidance, which is currently the subject of consultation. Local priorities in LAAs flow from an area's Sustainable Community Strategy, while national priorities are set out in Public Service Agreements and Departmental Strategic Objectives. Once priorities for areas have been agreed, each area will negotiate up to 35 targets with Government, drawn from indicators in a new national set of 198, and may agree an unlimited number of local targets (not subject to central reporting or performance management). In addition, each area will also agree with Government a number of statutory education and Early Years targets, also drawn from the national indicator set.
- *The Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP)* is a single, strategic, overarching plan, which feeds into the LAA, setting out how the local authority and partners will meet the needs of children and young people in an area. Children's trusts, which oversee local partnership arrangements, should ensure that schools, school forums and school admission forums are consulted in the preparation of the CYPP. Correspondingly, schools are under a duty to "have regard" to the CYPP when undertaking their duties to promote well-being, community cohesion and high standards of educational achievement.

Schools have a potentially important role to play in both the shaping and delivery of these various plans and agreements. This is likely to be most effective if schools in an area can work together. Contacts in the LA who will be able to offer advice and support include: the local Children's Services Department; the Community Cohesion Officer; and the officer responsible for supporting the LSP.

Tension Monitoring

Understanding and monitoring tension and conflict in local communities: A practical guide for local authorities, police service, and local agencies ICoCo 2007
<http://www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/d/361>

Sometimes the community dynamics may be such that there are tensions which may threaten the peace or stability of the community. Local Authorities and the police monitor community tensions in order to work with communities to address the underlying causes and seek to develop solutions which reduce the tensions and risks of disorder. Information for this comes from a wide range of sources and schools have a key role to play in Tension Monitoring as what happens in schools is often a reflection of the feelings and issues within the wider community. Feeding information into a wider picture is important in understanding local tensions and seeking preventative solutions. Usually Tension Monitoring is led from the Community Safety Team within the Council who will value your input, but also seek to help you if there are tensions in and around the school.

Other Useful Sources on Cohesion

There is a great deal of information, advice and case studies on cohesion. Some of the most useful are as follows:

Institute of Community Cohesion (www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk) provides a comprehensive list of publications, research, guidance toolkits and resources on cohesion and a practitioners network

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/communitycohesion includes case studies of good practice across a range of different schools

Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) (www.idea.gov.uk), set up by local government to improve local government, provides advice and case studies on building cohesion

Local Government Association (LGA) (www.lga.gov.uk) provides advice on community cohesion, including Community Cohesion an Action Guide 2004, and information about developments in local government around LAAs, LSPs etc

What works in community cohesion June 2007

(<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/whatworks>) is a research study conducted for Communities and Local Government and the Commission on Integration and Cohesion in six case study areas.

Integration and Cohesion case studies 2007 (www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk) is an extensive list of case studies prepared to inform the work of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion

Department of Communities and Local Government (Neighbourhoods)
(www.neighbourhood.gov.uk)