A curriculum planning guide for schools

Community cohesion in action
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The purpose of this guide

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This guide helps you build community cohesion into the learning experience of all your learners. It provides a clear vision of why this work is crucial and how the curriculum can play a key part in promoting community cohesion within a school, its local community and the wider world.

Practical activities help you explore the difference you can make to learners by embedding community cohesion within your curriculum. These activities focus on three key questions:

1. What are you trying to achieve?
2. How will you organise learning?
3. How well are you achieving your aims?

Schools and their communities are diverse, so no one approach to community cohesion will fit all. Case studies from primary and secondary schools show a range of different approaches, from engaging disaffected learners through community drama projects to valuing diversity by creating links between schools that have very ethnically different pupil populations.

This guide concludes with a brief overview of the organisations and agencies that can support your community cohesion work.

Related resources

This guide may be used alongside the following publications:

Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion, Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)

The guidance explains what is meant by community cohesion and describes how a school can contribute to it, outlining the work that many schools already do to promote community cohesion.

Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism, DCSF

This toolkit gives background information on the threat from violent extremist groups of various kinds, and on what might make young people vulnerable, together with practical advice on building resilience and managing risks.

It can be downloaded from www.dcsf.gov.uk/violentextremism.

Ref: DCSF-00598-2007

Ref: DCSF-00804-2008
What is community cohesion?

“By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people’s backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.”

*Guidance on Community Cohesion, DCSF*

Britain is a multicultural society and has a rich heritage of cultural and ethnic diversity stretching back for centuries. Young people can help keep Britain a place where diversity is valued and everyone is accepted regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age or religion/belief. We need to consider ways in which all members of our society can feel that they belong, can contribute and are accepted in order to make our society more cohesive. Within any community there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which, if used in creative ways, encourages high levels of participation and can be channelled into positive, collective action.

Britain is also a democracy underpinned by certain values, including freedom of speech and opinion, equality before the law, religious freedom, protection of minorities, tolerance, fairness and justice. While people may hold different beliefs and opinions, it is important that these values can be shared, practised and upheld by different groups of people. Creating opportunities for people to interact and work on projects of shared values is critically important in a society where there are frequent changes in population. People have migrated to Britain from many parts of the world for centuries, bringing new skills, expertise, cultures and beliefs. These ongoing changes can also present challenges, including different types of discrimination or conflicts of values, and can lead to some people becoming isolated.

Giving people the opportunity to interact and make a contribution to their community can also build bridges, dispel myths and develop a shared sense of belonging.

“I believe that community cohesion is when people from different backgrounds and cultures unite and share their views openly – without resorting to misunderstanding or violence. This helps to prevent prejudice and joins different people together.”

*Year 10 learner*

“A cohesive society is one in which the statistical chance of any member of society gaining access to a service, acquiring a job or achieving educational success is not related to his or her race, faith or cultural background – only to his or her talent, ambition and desire.”

*Institute of Community Cohesion*
What is the duty to promote community cohesion and what does it mean for schools?

The Children’s Plan sets out the government’s ambitions for improving children’s and young people’s lives over the next decade and how it intends to achieve them. Schools can play a vital role in promoting community cohesion.

Schools have a duty to promote community cohesion, and from September 2008 Ofsted has been required to inspect and report on the contributions made in this area. Every school is responsible for educating children and young people who will live and work in a diverse society. Through their ethos and curriculum, schools can promote a common sense of identity and support diversity, showing pupils how different communities can be united by common experiences and values. The staff and pupil populations of some schools reflect this diversity, and here pupils from different backgrounds mix. Other school populations do not have this diversity, and making links with other schools and organisations gives their pupils the opportunity to mix with and learn with, from and about those from different backgrounds.

“As a school community we have developed a set of ethos values to ensure that all relationships within our community are positive. These values are known to all as FIRST (fairness, integrity, respect, support and trust).”

Vigo Junior School, Andover

“Schools are well placed to become a focal point for the local community and to foster better relationships between diverse communities. The introduction of the duty on schools to promote community cohesion recognises the good work that many schools are already doing. The curriculum can play a key part in promoting community cohesion.”

The Children’s Plan
What do learners think about community cohesion?

The following views were captured from learners in the primary and secondary schools featured in this guide.

“Community cohesion is important because you need to know the people around you.”

“I like my school community because it’s like a jigsaw puzzle. Without one piece it’s never complete.”

“Community cohesion is the mixing of different cultures. It helps people connect and find their similarities rather than concentrate on minor and cosmetic differences.”

“The school community group I am in helps me to see what other people are really like, instead of assuming stuff about them, like what they might be thinking or feeling. It means you don’t judge people before you know them.”

“I believe that for community cohesion to exist, we must accept everyone’s individuality and also equality. For this to succeed we must start from the schools. The school helps us understand this, therefore we can take it into the outer community and all aspects of everyday life.”
Community cohesion in the curriculum

Embedding community cohesion in the curriculum is vital in addressing the new national curriculum aims to develop successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. The new primary and secondary curriculum offers schools opportunities to design learning experiences that promote community cohesion and are purposeful, memorable and challenging for learners. Schools can build on what they already do to help young people develop a strong sense of identity and self-belief, understand their rights and responsibilities within their communities, and engage with people of different beliefs or culturally diverse backgrounds. A coherently planned curriculum should also enable learners to discuss and analyse potentially controversial issues such as bullying or homophobia, explore the contribution of different cultures to areas of knowledge such as science, art or mathematics, and participate in community-based activities.

The case studies featured in this guide show how different schools have planned and integrated a focus on community cohesion within their curriculum and offer the following useful tips:

1. Monitor and evaluate the impact of your work on community cohesion over a number of years, particularly when assessing changes in behaviours and attitudes
2. Remove barriers to pupils’ participation in learning by creating opportunities for learners to take part in new experiences, to push themselves beyond their usual comfort zones and to develop greater confidence and self-belief
3. Create a culturally inclusive curriculum that visibly values the contribution of different cultures both to your school, to British society and to the world beyond
4. Involve the school with a diverse range of community groups and partners such as the police, faith leaders and professional theatre companies, to enrich learning within and across subjects
5. Set up successful links with other schools within your region, for example using the Schools Linking Network (SLN), in order to explore different geographical areas, concepts such as identity and diversity and to develop positive relationships with pupils from different cultural backgrounds.
Community cohesion in the curriculum

The new primary curriculum

Following a review by Sir Jim Rose and consultation by QCDA, a new primary curriculum to be taught from September 2011 was announced on 19 November 2009.

This new curriculum will be organised around six broad areas of learning to help schools and children make coherent links across all their learning. It is a model that advocates direct subject teaching, complemented by serious and challenging cross-curricular studies that provide ample opportunities for children to use and apply their subject knowledge in order to deepen understanding.

The six areas of learning underpinning the new primary curriculum offer many opportunities to promote community cohesion. These are:

1. understanding English, communication and languages
2. mathematical understanding
3. understanding the arts
4. historical, geographical and social understanding
5. understanding physical development, health and well-being
6. scientific and technological understanding.

Religious Education (RE) remains a statutory subject and part of the basic primary curriculum.

The flexibility provided by the new primary curriculum will provide new opportunities for schools to design learning experiences that promote community cohesion. The case studies for primary schools showcased in this publication, utilising the existing national curriculum, provide an excellent starting point for embedding community cohesion in the new primary curriculum.

Curriculum planning grids

The grids on the next page have been developed to support initial planning for designing learning experiences that promote community cohesion in the new primary curriculum and new secondary curriculum. These smaller versions of the grids are provided here for illustration. Full-size versions can be downloaded from the National curriculum website in the about the new primary curriculum or about the new secondary curriculum sections of the website. The grids have been designed to support teachers’ thinking in designing a coherent curriculum that integrates the key elements:

- **secondary** – which of the national curriculum aims, cross-curriculum dimensions, personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) and subjects can work together in planning coherent compelling learning experiences that focus on community cohesion?

- **primary** – which of the aims, essential skills for learning and life, and areas of learning can be drawn together in promoting community cohesion?

Use the grid as part of planning discussions, drawing arrows linking key elements of the curriculum that you think are related to the learning experiences you are designing.

You can also use the compare tools on the primary or secondary sections of the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum to support this process.
To use the curriculum planning grids, please download them from the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.

### Planning community cohesion in the new secondary curriculum

**National curriculum aims**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Identity and cultural diversity</th>
<th>Healthy lifestyles</th>
<th>Community cohesion</th>
<th>Global dimensions and sustainable development</th>
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**Cross-curriculum dimensions**

- Subject
- Subject
- Subject
- Subject

**National curriculum aims**

1. Identify which subject concepts, processes, range and content and curriculum opportunities will be important components of community cohesion.

To support this process, you can use the subject compare tool on the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.

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### Planning community cohesion in the new primary curriculum

**National curriculum aims**

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**National curriculum aims**

1. Identify which subject concepts, processes, range and content and curriculum opportunities will be important components of community cohesion.

To support this process, you can use the subject compare tool on the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.
Teaching and learning about controversial issues, and building resilience to violent extremism

Schools have a powerful role to play in building strong, safe and cohesive communities. This section explores ways to tackle controversial issues and the values that underpin them in the curriculum, including teaching and learning strategies that challenge extremist narratives and promote human rights.

Schools can build on what they already do to:

- help pupils develop the skills needed to evaluate effectively and discuss potentially controversial issues such as homophobia, bullying or racism in ways that promote critical analysis (particularly of the media), pro-social values and human rights
- build resilience to extremist narratives through providing a safe space to openly debate issues that are important to learners, including exploring their own identity in a respectful, critical and constructive way (and to challenge commonly held ‘myths’ or misinformed views and perceptions)
- ensure that, within the teaching of subjects, learners are able to understand that civilisation or knowledge are not the possession of any one race but have acted as a bridge between communities and countries throughout human history
- provide opportunities for pupils to understand, meet and engage with people from different faiths, cultures and social backgrounds in ways that promote common values while recognising diversity within communities
- help learners engage with and feel committed to their community through participation in a range of school-based or community initiatives – from performance, to environmental projects, to support for vulnerable groups such as the elderly.

Further support

Pages 16 and 17 of Community cohesion in action show how a group of schools and colleges approached teaching and learning about controversial issues.

Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism, DCSF.
Embedding teaching and learning about controversial issues

The following table illustrates approaches that schools could take and builds on existing good practice in many schools.

What are we trying to achieve?

- Learners are empowered to engage with controversial issues.
- Learners have the skills to identify and challenge extremist narratives.
- Learners are comfortable with their identity and sense of belonging.
- Learners have access to role models and mentors.
- Learners are effective participators who engage in school and community activities.
- Learners are aware of the contribution of different cultures to knowledge.

How will we organise the learning?

- Agree approaches as staff, identify potential conflicts of value, develop strategies for dealing with difficult issues and identify training needed.
- Focus learning on the cross-curriculum dimensions, particularly media and technology (becoming critical users of media messages); global dimension and sustainable development (becoming global citizens); identity and cultural diversity (becoming comfortable with self in a plural community).
- Develop cross-curriculum themes such as conflict, culture, faith, migration.
- Audit subjects to ensure they explore how different cultures have contributed to different areas of knowledge throughout history.
- Create space for learners to explore the social and emotional aspects of learning and to develop skills of effective participation and enquiry, for example via meditation workshops.
- Work with external programmes or groups such as interfaith groups or theatre companies to organise events such as a debate on terrorism with another local school.

How well are we achieving our aims?

- Agree evaluation methods across your whole schools; for example qualitative methods such as interviews, video vox pops or surveys, and quantitative methods such as audits or monitoring patterns of behaviour.
- Discuss and agree what you wish to evaluate. For example, does your curriculum content contribute to an appreciation of cultural diversity? Is there a strong active pupil voice within your school? Have staff (and perhaps the school council) received training in how to tackle controversial issues?
- Now focus on the evidence you will collect and how this will be recorded.
What does Ofsted say about community cohesion?

The text below is from Ofsted’s publication, *Inspecting maintained schools’ duty to promote community cohesion: guidance for inspectors*, February 2009.

**How does a school contribute towards community cohesion?**

All schools, whatever the mix of pupils they serve, are responsible for equipping those pupils to live and thrive alongside people from many different backgrounds. For some schools with diverse pupil populations, existing activities and work aimed at supporting pupils from different ethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds to learn with, from and about each other will already be contributing towards community cohesion. For other schools, where the pupil population is less diverse or predominantly of one socioeconomic, ethnic, faith or non-faith background, more will need to be done to provide opportunities for interaction between children and young people from different backgrounds.

Just as each school is different, each school will make an important but different contribution to community cohesion. Each will therefore need to develop an approach reflecting:

1. the nature of the school’s population – whether it serves pupils drawn predominantly from one or a small number of religions or beliefs, ethnic or socioeconomic groups or from a broader cross-section of the population, or whether it selects by ability from across a wider area

2. the location of the school – for instance whether it serves a rural or urban area and the level of ethnic, socioeconomic, religious or non-religious diversity in that area.

If a school is to successfully fulfil its duty to promote community cohesion, it should focus on the three key strands (faith, ethnicity and culture, and socioeconomic factors) and demonstrate:

1. that it understands the context of its own community
2. that it has planned and taken an appropriate set of actions
3. that these actions have had an evident impact.

An effective approach to community cohesion will consider these strands at the different levels of community where action can take place – within the school itself, the geographical community or the wider national and global communities – to determine the school’s contribution to community cohesion accordingly.

For further information, please go to [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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Community cohesion in action is in line with the key recommendations from Ofsted. It features schools that are successfully integrating community cohesion into the curriculum. The practical activities built around the three curriculum questions on pages 14–19 provide schools with support in developing community cohesion across their curriculum through disciplined innovation.
### Evaluating how well the school contributes to community cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outstanding</strong></td>
<td>Pupils are very proud of and committed to their school community. This is demonstrated by their enthusiastic promotion of a broad range of activities to improve the school and the wider community. Most groups of pupils are represented in taking on responsibilities. Pupils from a wide range of groups have a strong voice in decisions relating to their learning and well-being. The pupils’ involvement in the school and their interaction in the wider community are substantial and highly valued.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></td>
<td>Pupils value their school community and willingly take on responsibility and participate constructively in school life beyond routine lessons and activities. Pupils hold clear views about their learning and well-being and participate keenly in discussions about these matters. Pupils understand and care about the issues facing their local area and where appropriate suggest and take actions to help improve the school and wider community. Pupils’ behaviour in the local area is well regarded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfactory</strong></td>
<td>Pupils take on responsibility and play a constructive role in the school. They have some influence on decisions about school life. They support initiatives to improve aspects of life in school and the wider community. Pupils’ behaviour promotes a positive relationship with the school’s local community.</td>
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</table>
| **Inadequate**      | 1. Pupils generally are reluctant to take on responsibilities or to play a part in the life of the school and wider community.  
2. Pupils have little or no influence on decisions that affect the quality of their learning and well-being.  
3. Pupils’ contribution to the school and wider community has little positive impact. |


Ref: 090098
The role of subjects in community cohesion

Schools should consider how the whole curriculum develops and promotes community cohesion, broadening cultural awareness, and provide opportunities for learners to discuss and debate issues of identity and diversity, including those relating to ethnicity, faith and belief.

The subject programmes of study of the new secondary curriculum provide numerous opportunities for developing curriculum approaches to community cohesion, for example:

1. the study of English has always been a way of exploring the world around us and our place within it. Through the key concept of cultural understanding, pupils have greater opportunities to use their experience of literature and the variety of linguistic heritages that contribute to the richness of language to explore the culture of their society, the groups in which they participate and questions of local and national identity.

2. in geography the concept of cultural understanding and diversity considers how people and places are represented in different ways and involves questions such as: Who am I? Where do I come from? Who is my family? Who are the people around me? Where do they come from? What is our story? This contributes to pupils’ understanding of diversity and social cohesion.

To identify these opportunities, use the subject compare tool on the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.

RE, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship are key subject areas that can make a significant contribution to the promotion of community cohesion, peaceful conflict and resolution because their subject matter gives opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others and understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

Commissioned by the DCSF, the Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) has been working with eleven subject associations, drawing together their subject expertise, to identify a range of resources for teachers to use in the classroom, that increase their confidence, knowledge and understanding within the context of promoting community cohesion and the prevention of violent extremism. These resources are available on the CfSA website at www.subjectassociations.org.uk.
Introduction to practical activities

Systematic planning for community cohesion within your curriculum

Schools and their communities are diverse and therefore no one approach to community cohesion will fit all. This section includes activities that other schools have found useful in helping them promote community cohesion within their curriculum.

Over the past three years QCDA has been working with schools, trying out ideas for curriculum innovation and sharing experiences. We have found that successful, effective curriculum innovation must be disciplined. It must be focused, based on evidence and closely monitored.

The seven-step process for disciplined innovation (shown below), tried and tested in schools, will help you transform your curriculum and ensure your changes have an impact on learners’ achievements, lives and prospects.

You can find out more about disciplined innovation in the QCA publication Disciplined curriculum innovation: making a difference to learners (QCA/08/3862), and the tools to support schools on the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.

This section contains activities for each of the three questions that need to be considered during any curriculum development work:

1. What are you trying to achieve?
2. How will you organise learning?
3. How well are you achieving your aims?

The case study section of this guide will give you examples of how other schools have answered the three questions and may be useful in stimulating discussion in your school.
1 What are you trying to achieve?

Community cohesion learner journey – visualising the skills, knowledge, understanding and values you would like your learners to have.

Activity instructions

Working in small groups, think about the best way to visualise a community cohesion learning journey for your learners. The diagram below illustrates the thoughts of a teacher in a school. Use this as a starting point for your thinking, linked to the disciplined innovation diagram.

› Priorities

We want our learners to take responsibility for their own behaviour, to be able to respect others’ beliefs and opinions and resolve conflict without resorting to anger or frustration.

› Starting points

Most of our learners have few strategies for dealing with conflict. Incidents of bullying are high, much of their learning is directed and opportunities for developing skills such as collaboration are limited.

› Goals

Our learners will understand the importance of shared values such as respect, fairness and support. They will model these within the classroom and playground. They will be effective problem solvers and team workers.
Using the outline opposite as a guide, work through the steps:

**Step 1: Identify your priorities.**
Think about who your learners are and how well they are achieving the curriculum aims that relate to community cohesion. Download a curriculum planning grid from the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum to identify which aims relate to your priorities. Does your curriculum currently help learners achieve these aims? Does it meet their needs, interests and aspirations? Does it reflect the needs of the local community or address particular fracture points or opportunities within the school or community?

**Step 2: Record your starting point.**
For each of your priorities, describe what you see and hear in your learners, using hard data to support your description. This will help form your baseline and enable you to track progress.

**Step 3: Set clear goals.**
Set goals for each of your priorities. Look at the picture of your learners at the moment and define how you would like this to change.

**Reflect on your activity**
Consider what you have written by thinking through the following:
- how do your goals relate to the national curriculum aims?
- can you track areas of your curriculum where these are a strength or weakness?
- which goals will you prioritise?
- are your goals long or short term? If they are short term, they are likely to require termly tracking.
Design a learning experience that will draw on learners’ own concerns, interests and cultures, could involve the local and wider community, and will help promote shared values.

**Activity instructions**

If you want your learners to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding and values you visualised in Question 1, what kind of learning experiences will they need? How will you plan for this across your curriculum?

Think about creating learning experiences that will ignite the interest of different groups of learners. How will you include learners who are underachieving, or who feel disengaged or undervalued to narrow the gap?

Your curriculum should be culturally rich and relevant, and underpinned by a shared ethos or values. It should include the entire planned learning experience: lessons, events, routines, extended hours, out-of-school learning, locations and environments, and in secondary schools should also consider qualifications, including new GCSEs, GCEs and Diplomas.

Download a curriculum planning grid from the National curriculum website at [www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum) and use it to determine which aims, PLTS, dimensions and subjects will link to create the kinds of compelling learning experiences that would benefit your learners and will draw on their own concerns, interests, cultures and communities.

**Developing experiences for your learners**

Choose one learning experience and think about the following:

- what resources will you need?
- think about time, staff, equipment, space and learning materials
- what teaching and learning strategies will you use?
- would this learning experience be most effective if it was organised for a group of learners, one class, a whole year group or the whole school?
- which subjects will be involved?
- how might you build on this learning experience to further develop the knowledge and understanding, skills, attitudes and attributes of your learners?

In 2009 QCDA worked with a group of 18 schools and colleges across England to capture their approaches to teaching controversial issues and the values that underpin them. The following page provides top tips identified by these schools for organising learning when teaching controversial issues.
Tackling controversial issues – ideas for organising learning

The following strategies used by schools and colleges in the Controversial Issues and Values group proved particularly successful in their curriculum development work.

1. Give learners greater ownership of their learning
Learners’ engagement with the work increased when they were given responsibility for aspects of projects. For example, groups of learners relished the opportunity to plan an activity around a controversial issue of their own choice. As one student said: “It helped me to speak my mind more and listen to other people’s ideas.”

2. Consider the whole planned learning experience
The most successful projects tackled controversial issues through a range of approaches, including lessons, assemblies, one-off events, displays, policy and training. This prevented the curriculum change being seen as a one-off.

3. Make learning purposeful and relevant
Learners found it motivating to be able to see the point of an activity and its relevance to life outside school. For example, a learner who helped to organise a borough-wide conference for young people on community safety enthused about being able to “conduct real-life work that will have an effect on me and future generations”.

4. Organise activities outside school
Taking learners out of the school environment to further their work had positive effects on engagement, motivation and understanding. For example, primary-aged children responded with a new maturity, focus and enthusiasm when given the opportunity to debate and discuss controversial issues in the council chambers at the local town hall.

5. Collaborate with other schools and colleges
The schools and colleges in the group benefited from sharing ideas and approaches. Giving learners opportunities to work with each other proved a great way to broaden horizons and increase engagement.

6. Keep people informed
Curriculum change related to controversial issues raised concerns among some learners, staff and parents that needed to be answered through open, honest communication. For example, a citizenship teacher won the support of parents by visiting them at home to discuss a project on the issues of drug and alcohol misuse.

7. Provide opportunities for open debate
The schools and colleges in the group soon realised the importance of creating an environment that respects everyone’s voice, encourages a frank exchange of views and provides plenty of opportunities for discussion. Several used the silent debate technique to prevent discussion becoming overheated. This involves learners taking it in turns to write their arguments, using different coloured pens, on a large piece of paper – all in silence!

8. Get training where needed
The group’s work underlined the importance of recognising and meeting the need for training to tackle curriculum change related to controversial issues. For example, it is not only staff who may need training. School council members in one school received training on what constitutes racist language and incidents before putting in place a range of initiatives with the help of staff.

9. Provide role models
Offering older students the opportunity to act as positive role models for younger learners can be a powerful force for change. As well as increasing the younger pupils’ engagement and understanding, it empowers and motivates the older learners.

10. Agree approaches as staff
Teachers involved in the group found it helpful to spend time working together to explore issues and identify potential conflicts of values before starting to work with learners.
How well are you achieving your aims?

The final three steps of the disciplined innovation diagram will help you review progress, evaluate and record impact, then maintain, change or move on. You could either add these steps to the community cohesion learning journey you developed in Question 1 or create a matrix as outlined on page 19.

Activity instructions

Take a baseline of what learners are like at the moment and monitor their progress to ensure curriculum changes have as great an impact as possible.

You could use the matrix on page 19 to create an overview of how you will review progress and evaluate the impact of your community cohesion work within your curriculum. The matrix uses the example goal shown in Question 1 and is only one example of curriculum change that could be implemented within a school.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Review progress</strong></th>
<th><strong>Evaluate and record the impact</strong></th>
<th><strong>Maintain, change or move on</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our goal</strong> is to enable learners to take responsibility for their own behaviour, to be able to respect others’ beliefs and opinions and resolve conflict without resorting to anger or frustration.</td>
<td>We will have achieved our goal if the majority of learners now understand the importance of shared values such as respect, fairness and support, can model these values within the classroom and playground and are able to solve problems and work collaboratively.</td>
<td>If our approach is working but we need more time to implement it, we will develop a maintenance strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will planreflection points on a termly basis to show progress in learners’ attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>As our goal requires significant change, we will record impact once yearly. We will describe whether the impact has been limited or considerable. We will report on the differences between our starting point and our current situation using the evidence collected.</td>
<td>If our approach has not resulted in changes, we will try a different one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We will collect evidence to show learners’ progress. This will include qualitative methods such as interviews, observations and pupil self-evaluation. We will also use quantitative methods such as monitoring incidents of bullying.</td>
<td>We will celebrate achievements made with staff, learners and parents.</td>
<td>If the evidence shows we have achieved our goals, we will move on to our next priority.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflect on your activity**

- Do your evaluation methods:
  - involve learners, colleagues and members of the wider community?
  - let you assess ongoing progress?
  - have the flexibility to build on the unexpected?
- How often will you use your evaluation methods? At what points would it be good to analyse the information?

- Do the evaluation methods measure impact on learner behaviour, achievement and self-esteem?
- What values, skills and behaviours do schools need to become cohesive?
- How could learners be involved in helping to measure success?
- Who will you share the information with and how?

Relate your evaluations to the Ofsted criteria on page 11.
The classrooms at Allerton Primary School were a model of diversity, containing pupils from a wide range of cultures, faiths and socioeconomic backgrounds, including many with English as an additional language. The staff knew, however, that this diversity would not automatically lead to positive links.

What did the school want to achieve?
Recognising that community cohesion and pupil achievement are inextricably linked, the staff hoped to create an internally cohesive school, with pupils, staff and parents valuing each other. Partnerships – particularly with parents – would form one part of their focus, along with a demonstration of commitment to all cultures through a creative curriculum. The school also wanted to make sure that outcomes for all groups of pupils were equal, and therefore needed to tackle underachievement, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

“We shared a belief as a staff team that being open to partnerships would bring about a transformation and we believed connecting with parents was the key to it all. With careful thought, we have also aimed to demonstrate our commitment to all cultures through our creative curriculum,” says Sharon Lambert, Headteacher.

How did the school organise learning to meet its aims?
The school action plan includes dedicated staff time for community cohesion and innovation. Staff put this learning to use during curriculum planning, focusing on achievement for all groups of pupils and on how to engage learners through an exciting, creative and culturally inclusive curriculum. A detailed system tracks each pupil’s needs and progress, while cross-curriculum schemes of work celebrate the cultural diversity at the school and explore issues such as equality.

The school introduced an annual Artsweek as a vehicle for community cohesion. It focuses on themes like identity and belonging and incorporates drama, music and parent-led workshops. Parents watch performances that show Britishness in a historical context and are inclusive of white British families, for example Robin Hood.

Allerton has formed a partnership with Schools Linking Network (SLN). As part of this, in 2008 year 5 pupils were engaged in a fair trade project involving pupils, learning mentors and parents that aimed to incorporate all the cultures of the school within this global dimension theme. Open-ended homework involved learners examining the fair trade logo and seeing what they could create from it using their imagination. In literacy, learners looked in more depth at the theme of equality and wrote poems called People equal. The work culminated in a performance at the University of Bradford for parents, which included a modern British song No wars will stop us singing and a Hindu dance devised using the four colours of the fair trade logo.

The school aims to understand the barriers to both learners’ and parents’ engagement through ongoing consultation with pupils, parents and Friends of Allerton, who include faith leaders and other local people. This research on
experiences, values and interests informs the school’s practice of supporting all learners and eliminating variations in outcomes for different groups. Since 2008 parents have been invited into the school in the mornings and after school to meet other parents and talk informally to teachers and learning mentors. Parents and friends are also members of a social cohesion group that meets termly and focuses on raising achievement, supporting homework and creating a culturally rich and relevant curriculum.

**How well is the school achieving its aims?**

The school’s strategy of connecting with parents and other adults within the community has been highly successful. Pupils see good role models and the school feels like a real community partnership.

“The doors are open to us all the time and the school feels like a real community partnership. This is a very positive step for preparing children to live and work in the world outside the school,” says Mohammid Mushtaq, Muslim Faith Tutor.

Attendance is well above the national average and has risen year on year. All parents talk to teachers and learning mentors about their children’s progress at regular intervals, for example through parents’ evenings. Parental consultation shows high levels of support and engagement with the school: 100 per cent say their child enjoys school, 100 per cent say their child is making good progress, and 98 per cent say they feel comfortable approaching the school. In 2009 the school’s key stage 2 results were its best ever, well above the national average.

Contextual value added puts the school within the top 3 per cent in the country.

This is supported in the school’s most recent Ofsted report: “... the school leaves no stone unturned in its efforts to respond to every pupil’s needs in often rapidly changing circumstances ... Its motto, ‘We are all in this together’, is evident in every aspect of the life of this vibrant school.”
What does the school plan to do next?

The partnership with SLN will continue to research how the school creates connections within its own community, with a new focus on playground games.

The teachers will continue to map elements of community cohesion against their curriculum offer, building on strengths and addressing gaps and weaknesses.

Artsweek 2010 will have the theme ‘Cities of the world’. Each day will have a whole-school focus on, for example, patterns of migration. Parents and pupils will work together on projects like building Lego skyscrapers or constructing bridges out of straws.

School environment

The school’s SCARF motto – safe, caring, achieving, respecting, friendly – is promoted throughout the visual appearance of the school to create a sense of belonging and self-esteem for all.

Adults as role models

A diverse range of adults model positive relationships for the children, particularly through whole-school assemblies. Whatever festival or faith an assembly may be celebrating, all faith leaders will be present and will interact via role play...

“What the children see is three adults of different faiths working together and enjoying themselves!” says Manji Kaur, Sikh Faith Leader.

Timeline

1997  
A first and a middle school each with different outlooks and approaches to learning exist on the current Allerton Primary School site. Allerton introduces the SCARF motto: safe, caring, achieving, respecting and friendly.

2000  
Following a local authority reorganisation, the two schools become one primary school. This is a chance for staff to establish a common ethos, values and curriculum across all year groups.

2000–5  
Engaging parents in the life of the school becomes a key strategy for staff in order to address issues of achievement, motivation and attendance.

2006  
The Friends of Allerton group is established. The school’s chair of governors is lead officer for inclusion and cohesion at Bradford City Council. Individual pupil tracking becomes well embedded throughout school.
## Case study 1

### Cross-curriculum learning

Community cohesion is embedded into all subjects, events and routines, such as Artsweek, visits to places of worship, whole-school singing, school linking and projects relating to concepts such as human rights, global interdependence or active citizenship, such as fair trade.

### Strategy and planning with learners

The Cohesion Innovation Team listens to pupils’ current interests and experience and creates a customised curriculum that reflects the diversity of the school and its community, and the changing needs, aspirations and capabilities of learners.

### Curriculum

“Our curriculum is everything and anything that we do in the school day. Community cohesion is embedded throughout.”

### Promoting engagement with parents

Parent consultations showed that barriers to children’s learning often included parents’ own lack of confidence, limited time to support children or other priorities. Staff and faith leaders support parents each morning, and at evening information-sharing sessions, through targeted literature, for example on homework support.

## Organising learning for community cohesion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event/Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>The school action plan includes dedicated staff time for community cohesion and innovation. A social cohesion group made up of parents and other friends of Allerton starts to meet termly. Artsweek is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>A new strategy of inviting parents into the school in the morning and after school is implemented. Ofsted judges the school outstanding in all areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Partnership with SLN established. Key stage 2 learners achieve Allerton’s best ever set of results, well above the national average. Contextual value added puts the school within the top 3 per cent in the country.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breeze Hill School, Oldham

Building bridges, broadening horizons

Breeze Hill is an 11–16 mixed comprehensive school serving some of the most economically and socially deprived wards in the country. Over 90 per cent of Breeze Hill’s students are from an ethnic minority background, mostly Pakistani, including an increasingly wide range of refugees and ethnic minorities. Many of the students come from monocultural primary schools, and racial tensions have long run high in the area – the Oldham riots in 2001 began with a racially motivated attack outside the school.

What did the school want to achieve?

Headteacher Bernard Phillips has led the school since 1991 and has always seen community cohesion as key to the school’s success. To reduce ethnic tensions, the school started working with pupils before they arrived at Breeze Hill, going out into the segregated primaries to do creative arts projects to build self-esteem, broaden cultural horizons and allow pupils from different schools and backgrounds to work together.

The school also wanted to improve academic achievement. When Bernard Phillips joined the school, fewer than 20 per cent of pupils achieved A–C at key stage 4, and year 7 pupils arriving at the school had an average reading age of 8.

How did the school organise learning to meet its aims?

To raise pupil achievement and motivation, staff set up innovative curriculum projects to tackle sensitive issues like migration in a way that gave learners a voice, and allowed pupils and parents to mix and learn from each other. In one of these projects (which were part of work done by Brea-zone, an education action zone the school joined) a professional theatre company and playwright worked with children and teachers in six feeder primary schools to develop material for a play and to improve the teaching of drama-based activities. The end product was a play devised by children from all six schools and taken on a tour around the schools. An all-white school invited an all-Pakistani school to see the play at their school.

Since receiving specialist humanities status in 2006, Breeze Hill has contributed 30 per cent of its specialist funding towards creating cohesion within the community around the school. English classes for parents have proved a notable success, and more than 10 per cent of the children have a family member taking an English qualification. Improving parents’ English skills helps their children learn, and also allows the school to better communicate its ethos and expectations.
The strong focus on improving transition from primary to secondary school continues once year 7s reach the school. Their learning is organised in a separate year 7 base, where they receive high levels of pastoral care and special educational needs and English as an additional language support to improve literacy and numeracy. The separate base also maximises the time learners can spend building positive relationships with their peers.

The flexibility of the new secondary curriculum has allowed the school to enrich learning in subjects like history and citizenship by organising projects involving the local community. Years 7 and 8 took part in an oral history project interviewing local residents about their teenage years. After looking for common themes in people’s stories, the children devised a drama set in Pakistan and Oldham, featuring two streetwise Oldham kids who are sent back to Mirpur to be ‘sorted out’ and find themselves isolated because they can’t speak the language.

“\[quote\]
The fundamental objective underlying this work was to reduce the ethnic tensions that often existed between different groups of children, and indeed parents, when they start at Breeze Hill.\[quote\n
Bernard Phillips, Headteacher

Staff have been looking to develop the global dimension in the curriculum. Several staff have been on study trips to Pakistan, particularly to Mirpur, the area where many pupils’ families are based, and have formed links with schools there. Geography, art, drama, ICT and English have used these links as a basis for creating cross-curricular modules of work, for example creating Our lives presentations in ICT and English to share with learners in link schools.

In a prize-winning initiative, staff and pupils worked together to create new arrivals supporters, pupils at the school who buddy up with new arrivals to help them integrate and make friends.
How well is the school achieving its aims?

Bernard Phillips has seen a marked difference in children’s attitudes towards each other, much less confrontation based on prejudice and ignorance, and a significant improvement in achievement. Pupils are much more willing to work in mixed groups than in the past. As the behaviour and literacy and numeracy strategies have taken effect, the school has seen dramatic improvement in key stage 3 test results.

Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1991</th>
<th>Mid 1990s</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School in special measures. Bernard Phillips becomes Headteacher. The school’s Asian population is roughly one-third of the school, but rising rapidly as white parents increasingly send their children elsewhere.</td>
<td>Staff create links with feeder primaries.</td>
<td>Breeze Hill develops a ‘Grow your own staff’ programme to embed the school as part of the local community and dispel negative perceptions. The school holds open days and encourages local people to volunteer at the school. Several go on to join graduate teaching programmes and then come back to join the school staff.</td>
<td>Oldham riots take place over five days in May.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community cohesion in action

The school’s 2007 Ofsted report was very positive, noting how the links with the local and wider community benefit pupils by raising self-esteem and aspirations, and promoting racial harmony.

“I was involved in putting on a drama production. I did the sound. Before, I never went to other schools and was confined to my own area. When we did the play, I saw other people, other cultures, other faiths. I realised how diverse our area is.”

Ibrahim, year 10

What does the school plan to do next?

Across Oldham, plans are in place to transform secondary education. These include replacing, rebuilding or refurbishing every secondary school in the borough. As part of these plans Breeze Hill School will become a coeducational academy for pupils aged 11–16. The academy will build on the success of the existing school, with a specialism in English and humanities.

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**2002**

The school becomes part of an Education Action Zone called Brea-zone.

Creative projects start with year 5 and 6 pupils in segregated primaries with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy.

Year 7 base is created.

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**2006**

Breeze Hill gains specialist status.

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**2007**

Staff and students work together to create new arrival supporters.

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**2008**

Breeze Hill allocates 30 per cent of its specialist funding to community projects, including parents’ English classes.
Burnage Arts and Media College is a boys’ comprehensive school with a very high proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and over 30 mother tongues spoken. Learners come from areas of high social and economic deprivation. Around half the students are of South Asian and British Muslim heritage, and 80 per cent of students are practising Muslims.

What did the school want to achieve?
Staff wanted to tackle controversial issues such as violent extremism across all areas of the curriculum and equip learners with the skills to discuss and analyse topical and sensitive issues with confidence, without resorting to anger or frustration. They were keen to encourage students to respect difference and readily engage with others, no matter what their community, religion or background, educating them about a broad range of issues and teaching them to look at things from different points of view.

Another key objective was to develop a curriculum that allows learners to investigate how people from different communities did and can work together, recognising both the Islamic and Christian contributions to different areas of learning.

How did the school organise learning to meet its aims?
All subject areas were audited to see how they addressed community cohesion. The staff worked hard to develop memorable learning experiences within the curriculum, choosing issues and content that would interest and be relevant to learners. PSHE and RE address the issue of preventing violent extremism with each year group. In year 7, learners take part in the UK Resilience Programme, which encourages students to examine powerful emotions and look for evidence to back up strong beliefs before taking action. This enables them to be more critical about the subjective and emotive messages of extremist groups. More explicit learning is undertaken in year 9 in a unit called understanding terrorism. Working in groups, students research and put forward arguments, then have an open discussion about what they have learnt.
“We focus on teaching our learners a set of skills such as comparing fact with opinion, analysing the effect of emotive language or writing to argue, which will enable them to succeed at GCSE. We try to ignite their interest and passion for learning and at the same time broaden their world view by using topical media stories, even those which may have broken the night before a lesson. Topics covered may range from knife crime to child soldiers to freedom of speech and the BNP,” says Ian Fenn, Headteacher.

Recognising shared heritage is integral to science and history schemes of work for years 7, 8 and 9. The idea is to show that civilisation and knowledge, particularly scientific and technological developments, are not the possession of any one race but have acted as a bridge between communities and countries throughout human history. In one lesson, pupils learn that the pinhole camera was invented a thousand years ago in Baghdad – that during the dark ages of medieval Europe Baghdad scientists were drawing the interior of the eye and calculating the diameter of the earth.

**How well is the school achieving its aims?**

The new focus on relevant and topical learning is having a positive impact on learners’ attainment, to the extent that in spring 2009 Burnage was recognised as one of the most improved schools in the country. “Our GCSE results improved 10 per cent in the last academic year. We feel strongly that this is because of increased motivation and engagement in the topics,” says Helen Carter, Head of English and Assistant Headteacher.

Ofsted has praised the school’s work on community cohesion, describing it as “a school community where students learn to work and live together harmoniously, regardless of their background.” The report also notes: “Parents reported that despite the difficulties and dangers in the areas served by the school, Burnage is an oasis and haven of safety for its students.”

**What does the school plan to do next?**

A new project called Head to Head will create space and time to start a dialogue with parents and the wider local community to discuss issues that are important to them and their children. One of the outcomes will be a shared set of values to underpin the school’s work on community cohesion.

A link with an orthodox Jewish school is also planned, with the idea that students will take part in joint overseas expeditions to make a contribution to a community in another country.
Helmshore is a large primary school in a relatively affluent part of rural Lancashire, where the majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds. Although only 10 miles away, Lomeshaye Junior School is in an urban area of high deprivation. Almost all pupils here are from Asian or Asian British backgrounds and many do not speak English as their first language.

What were the schools trying to achieve?
Helping children understand their own culture and beliefs while sharing common experiences and values is a key objective. Both schools are almost entirely monocultural; religion is so central to identity for the pupils at Lomeshaye that they often refer to themselves as Muslims and white children as Christians. The schools wanted to create curriculum-based projects to support community cohesion and to help children form positive relationships outside their usual experience.

“It feels like there is an invisible border between the two areas,” explains Helmshore’s Headteacher, Christine Myers. “Our aim is to move our children beyond a fairly ‘cocooned environment’ to the more mixed environment that they will experience at secondary school. Our curriculum from reception upwards encourages learners to appreciate the benefits of diversity as well as developing a strong sense of self-worth and personal identity.”

How did the schools organise learning to meet their aims?
In 2007 both schools applied to be part of a project called SLIDE run by Lancashire Global Education Centre (LGEC) in partnership with Lancashire County Council and SLN. The project’s aim was to appreciate, value and explore the differences and similarities between people and places through school linking. The link involved two year 3 classes from Lomeshaye and two year 4 classes from Helmshore. The teachers created a structured cross-curriculum learning programme with support from LGEC. To explore preconceived ideas of identity and cultural diversity, the schools swapped photos of each year group and asked learners what they could see. Questions from Lomeshaye pupils included: ‘Is it fair that the tall children get to stand at the back?’ and ‘How come there is only one Muslim and lots of Christians?’ Teachers
were then able to question some of the children’s assumptions or perceptions, for example by asking whether they could assume that all the children were the same religion.

Once staff had revealed the purpose of the project, each child created a hand of friendship that expressed their identity to exchange with a child from the link school. The children wrote to each other in literacy lessons, in geography they explored the schools’ localities using aerial photographs, and in PE they practised games from around the world that they could play together.

“Children really valued the hands and were respectful of what they were looking at. There was also great excitement about receiving individual letters as most had never had a letter addressed to them before,” says Ellie Payne, Teacher, Lomeshaye.

By the time children at the two schools actually met, there was a huge buzz around the project and the children felt confident about working in teams together. They organised themselves to play a game, formed friendship circles and paired up with their pen pal.

Anna, now in year 5 at Helmshore remembers: “I enjoyed writing to my pen pal and finding out about her. Before we met the other kids I thought they’d be really different.

But there were lots of similarities like food, favourite colours, similar school building. We thought because they were at a different school they wouldn’t know the same things.”

Alongside the linking project, both schools incorporate across the curriculum big themes or issues such as rights and responsibilities, identity and racism. By year 6, learners are encouraged to openly debate difficult issues such as racism.

How well are the schools achieving their aims?

Helmshore was the third school in Lancashire to be awarded the Lancashire Race Equality kitemark for its outstanding work on integrating multicultural and anti-racism education into the curriculum over many years.

The impact of the SLIDE project has been measured by tracking class discussions and assessing the quality of learners’ work and engagement. Pupils have an increased knowledge and understanding of the diversity within their local area and have skills in making friendships outside their own environment. They can distinguish between fact and opinion or perception and have respect for the differences and similarities between people and places.

Ofsted also praises both schools’ efforts to create local partnerships and links, reporting that Lomeshaye pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, and noting that leaders at Helmshore have created strong partnerships to promote local community cohesion, celebrating the diversity of modern British society.

“I’ve learnt that it’s important to learn about differences, because apart from how we look on the outside we’re all similar on the inside. My mum thought the project was a great idea because it’s very good to link up with different people and meet them. She would like it to continue and so would I!” says Max, year 5, Helmshore.

What do the schools plan to do next?

Learners are so enthusiastic that both schools have agreed to continue the link with all year 5 classes without any external funding. In addition, the schools have applied to SLIDE for funding to start a link with new year 3 pupils. Involving parents in the project will be the next step, and both schools are looking at setting up a parents’ group.
St Alban’s Catholic High School, Ipswich

Creating an inclusive curriculum

St Alban’s Catholic High School is a specialist technology college with 800 learners, of whom 67 per cent are of white British background. The school has a long history of working with local partner schools and teaching its specialism to emotionally disturbed young people.

What was the school trying to achieve?

“Our aim has been to remove barriers for children attending local pupil referral units. There are many areas of the curriculum, including technology, to which these young people previously had no access,” says Cindi Rooney, Assistant Headteacher.

In April 2008, at a time of growing diversity within its classes, the school took on another specialism focusing on inclusion via cognition and learning, and put priority on community cohesion.

Director of Inclusion Sarah Asher explains: “Our vision is to ensure that all our learners, whatever their background or faith, have equal access to the curriculum and that our curriculum reflects the diversity within our community. We focus on personalised learning. We’re also aiming to address a specific problem, after feedback from our African heritage pupils told us that some felt there was some exclusion of their culture at school. This was having an impact on attendance.”

How did the school organise learning to meet its aims?

Staff have spent time thinking about the school’s ethnic and socioeconomic fit, and how young people within the school relate to the local community. Sarah Asher explains: “We needed to define what our cultures are within the school and how we can draw them together while respecting our differences. Equally important was the need to think about what kind of community we want to create, including our local and global links.”

Young people who have been classed as school refusers can make full use of St Alban’s technology facilities and specialist teaching staff through the inclusion resource area. This includes boys who have been barred from using equipment during practicals.

Teachers at St Alban’s and the pupil referral units worked on a vocational programme aimed at giving work-related learning, which has now been developed into a GCSE in resistant materials.

A community group was set up in 2008 to engage parents of hard-to-reach learners. It involved students, parents (particularly those of African heritage pupils), the Polish club, Indian Catholic community, local police and community workers. Students came up with the name Community, Organising, Global, Sharing (COGS).

The COGS group brings parents into the school to celebrate their children’s achievements. Students recently organised a cultural café, bringing some parents into the school for the first time. Many were surprised to find people from their own heritage cultures there.

“We only had half the number of tables for the people that turned up! I think it was popular because we said that we would be celebrating lots of different cultures not just one,” recalls Hannah in year 9.

“We focus on personalised learning.”

Sarah Asher, Director of Inclusion
Learning mentors at the school are helping learners achieve to the best of their ability. “Take two of our Polish students who arrived with no English. Both are given support with English so they’re on top of classroom instructions. One of the girls has a learning mentor for English so she can go on to GCSEs. With our help, the other is working toward a speakers for other languages course,” says Sarah Asher.

**How well is the school achieving its aims?**

Joining forces with local pupil referral units has helped many learners extend beyond vocational learning and achieve a GCSE grade (the majority A–C). Some have won local industry awards for design and technology for four years running. Past school refusers are planning to continue their education at college or sixth form.

The school’s personalised learning programme has been highly praised by Ofsted: “The school has an excellent record of setting and achieving challenging targets for students based on a careful analysis of their potential, so there are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of students.”

The COGS group has helped parents and pupils feel more involved in school life. All students now have the chance to join groups like the school council or COGS: “They encourage us to get our views heard. Before it was people who were popular who got to be the representatives. Now it’s people who really want to do something,” says Hannah, year 9.

Involving parents has had a dramatic impact on school attendance.

“This term, academic year 2008/9, early figures show that black African-Caribbean non-attendance has dropped from 4.87 per cent to 0.92 per cent. Other black African non-attendance has dropped from 10.87 per cent to nothing, and white eastern European from 7.77 per cent to 3.61 per cent,” says Cindi Rooney.

**What does the school plan to do next?**

The global dimension will feature strongly in future plans. A group of pupils will lead assemblies in primary schools on global issues. Years 10 upward will visit Auschwitz concentration camp as part of their history studies. There are also plans to develop a school link with Spain.

Sarah Asher intends to build on existing good practice within the curriculum, for example mathematics students being able to trace how the subject has emerged from different cultures.
Tapton School, Sheffield

Being different, belonging together

Tapton is a high-achieving secondary school with over 1,660 students. The majority are white British, with around 20 per cent from black and minority ethnic groups. Community cohesion that involves learners, staff, parents, governors and the local community is at the heart of school life.

What was the school trying to achieve?

“It’s about what we can all contribute now and how we interact with each other, both within and outside the school community. All of our community cohesion work is about respect, valuing everyone and celebrating difference,” says David Bowes, Headteacher.

Associate Assistant Headteacher Naomi Evans-Mudie leads on engagement and inclusion. She looks for every opportunity to motivate young people and remove any barriers to their learning, particularly after 2006 national tests and examinations showed that a very small group of African boys and lower ability boys and girls were not progressing as well as their peers. “Our aim is to recognise disaffected groups of learners and then support any underachieving child, particularly learners from black and ethnic communities. It’s important to take our students beyond their usual comfort zones and challenge them to take part in new experiences and interact with different groups of people.”

How did the school organise learning to meet its aims?

Involving the local community has enriched subject-focused learning. For example, 40 GCSE drama students, working with a local community forum and the University of the Third Age, interviewed local retired people about their teenage lives. The learners used techniques like storyboarding to bring the stories to life, and then showed their scripts to the retired participants. The work was showcased locally at venues such as the Northern General Hospital and proved very popular with learners.

“This piece of work was different because it was based on something real. It brought us into contact with a group we wouldn’t normally have met,” says Jack, year 11.

In 2008, a number of year 11s took part in the Inspiring Youth programme run by South Yorkshire police. As part of the project, they entered a competition on diversity.
Working to an extremely tight deadline, they produced a DVD called *Being different, belonging together*.

Elyas Blidi, year 12, explains the students’ approach: “We just kept it simple and asked each person to say their name, where they come from and then one special fact about themselves. We didn’t think about age, ethnic groups or about giving a definition of what diversity is. Through the video we just showed people what it was.”

The school’s creative arts specialism engages with hard-to-reach parents and involves them in their children’s learning. For a PSHE and art project in 2008, year 9 created a sensory garden to commemorate the death of a visually impaired student. They researched the five senses, and made mosaics and clay tiles. A hands-on community day brought together students and parents with a local sculptor to create and plant the garden.

Learners even got to present the film to members of the European Parliament.

One parent remarked: “This project gave my son the chance to get his voice heard within the local community and then to go on and speak publicly to national and international audiences.”

The work with local retired people has broken down barriers between young and old. Peter Barclay recalls his initial reaction as being ”15-year-old kids, keep me away from them,” but by the end of the project he remarked: “The courtesy and friendliness of the girls and boys was a joy to all of us.” Similarly, Isabel in year 11 said: “I thought it might be quite boring, but they were really interesting. They had proper, personal stories about a real time in their lives.” Sheffield City Council is sharing the approach city-wide as part of its community cohesion strategy.

The school’s excellent Ofsted report noted: “Students are aware of their social and moral responsibilities and are proud to be members of the school community. They respect each other, the school environment and staff. Consequently, standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary.”

**Next steps**

Naomi Evans-Mudie wants community cohesion to span all departments, creating a planned learning experience for all students: “I’d like to ensure that we’ve a culturally rich and relevant curriculum, whether it’s maths or science. We’ll have a strong focus on using first-hand experiences – either our own students’ or those of people within the community – as this certainly adds depth to learning.”

**How well is the school achieving its aims?**

Taking learners beyond their usual comfort zones has had unexpected results.

The *Being different, belonging together* DVD won a local prize, then a national prize and finally a worldwide competition in Vienna.
Vigo Junior School, Andover

Values come FIRST at Vigo!

Vigo Junior School is a 7–11 junior school with 280 pupils. Most are white British and from considerably disadvantaged backgrounds. The school has had a troubled history, with poor pupil behaviour, high staff turnover and test results significantly below the national average. It was placed in special measures in November 2001.

What was the school trying to achieve?
The leadership changed in 2002: “Our overall goal was to remove the evident barriers to our children’s learning and to provide opportunities for all to succeed. We spent a lot of time devising strategies for turning our relatively passive and low-achieving learners into children who were ignited by learning and aspired to succeed. An underlying aim was to create positive links and relationships between staff and parents, and between children and parents,” says Nicola Smith, Acting Headteacher.

How did the school organise learning to meet its aims?
First, staff focused on creating an internally cohesive school where learners, staff and parents shared a common vision and values. Learners and staff together developed a set of ethos values for the school and playground. Each class worked on a word a week, looking at words, such as respect, and what they meant to them.

“Our ethos values are fairness, integrity, respect, support and trust. Integrity means that if something has gone wrong, we will tell the truth. Trust means relying on people, and support is helping someone in the playground if they get hurt,” say Megan and Blake, year 6.

The school council gathered all the responses and fed back to each class and to staff.

“We took the new ethos values to the staff through staff meetings, and the children and the parents via assemblies. They were displayed everywhere and put in all correspondence to parents. Pupils clearly understood the values and were very proud of them,” says Nicola Smith.

The school changed its behaviour policy and brought in praise pads, which recorded positive behaviour, for pupils to take home. Behaviour settled down and exclusions had fallen dramatically by early 2005.

Staff also thought up new strategies to give their pupils the chance to succeed at the highest level possible. Teachers developed a new home-learning strategy. Learners could work with their parents on creative, practical tasks to match in-class projects. Homework completion rates quickly neared 100 per cent.
Family work is regularly displayed around the school and celebrated in assembly.

A Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) project was also trialled by year 3 and 4 families. They spent quality time together looking at themes such as healthy eating and relationships.

“The themes of SEAL are very relevant to our children’s and parents’ lives and include looking at how to resolve conflict. Parents spend time during the school day working on activities with their children, which are then followed up at home. One of the great benefits is creating interest in children’s learning and in helping families to spend quality time together,’ says Leslie Graham, Special Educational Needs Coordinator.

The school’s integrated curriculum is designed to build learners’ self-esteem and ignite their passion for learning. Learning is organised through a series of projects that combine subjects with values such as independence and interdependence. Each project ends in an event for families to celebrate what their children have learnt. For example, the project ‘Me me me’ focuses on identity. It involves learners bringing into school things that are of interest to them. Learners interview their families, create a timeline from birth, learn to draft and edit their work, and spend time learning about writing for real audiences and producing their own autobiographies.

How well is the school achieving its aims?
The school’s ethos and values, together with the integrated curriculum, have helped to remove barriers to learning and set up a happy, safe and united school community. Parents value the school highly, and are respectful and supportive of staff. Many parents want to attend courses about home learning: “I enjoyed this course. It has helped my child understand conflict. He’s playing much fairer with his brother now and is beginning to think now before he acts,” says the parent of a year 3 pupil attending a SEAL course.

Children are also taking more responsibility for their behaviour, as Megan in year 6 describes: “The ethos values help because all the kids work together better and we’re able to solve our own problems and know we’re in a safe place.”

Standards are still below the national average but keep showing significant improvement. National curriculum test results in English have risen from 58 per cent in 2001 to 71 per cent in 2008 and in mathematics from 52 per cent to 70 per cent.

“The outstanding curriculum is creative and stimulating, making learning meaningful, purposeful and very enjoyable for all pupils. The integrated learning approach incorporates the systematic development of key values and basic skills, and meets all requirements. It is one of the main reasons why pupils’ learning has improved so rapidly,” says Ofsted, 2008.

Next steps
A global dimension partnership called ‘Learn, enjoy, play’, involving seven schools across Europe, is about to begin with a staff focus on sharing strategies for behaviour management. The school is reaching out to the local community by creating links with the elderly and is part of an Andover initiative to become a rights-respecting town.
What did the local authority want to achieve?

Coventry is an ethnically diverse city with an ever-changing population. Around a third of the city’s school-aged children are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many live in deprived neighbourhoods.

Coventry local authority wants to grow a sense of belonging and mutual respect among all its learners. Tensions can arise between recent arrivals and the settled residents. Helping learners to become active and responsible citizens, by developing a student voice and links within the community, is really important.

Balbir Sohal, who leads on citizenship, equalities, pupil voice and participation, explains: “We want to explore what is the ‘glue’ that holds people together, while at the same time enabling children and young people to hold onto their own culture and beliefs.”

How does the local authority organise learning to meet its aims?

There are four strands to Coventry’s community cohesion work in schools.

1. **Student voice**
   In 2008, 11- to 16-year-olds from across Coventry had their say about their experience of school, their family, friendships and what they did in their spare time. Some 14,000 took part in the Communities that Care survey through their school.

2. **Partnerships and extended services**
   Coventry aims to link up different schools and communities, so young people can enjoy new experiences of shared values. It joined SLN in 2009 and has set up a project linking 20 diverse schools across the district.
Community cohesion in action

How well is the local authority achieving its aims?

Coventry’s community cohesion work reaches all schools either through training and conferences, or through guidance, targeted mailings or publications.

Ninety-eight per cent of primary schools take part in the year 6 conference. Around 90 per cent of secondary schools join in yearly secondary youth conferences. Following a year 9 conference, a group of pupils chose to work on combating homophobia. Their project has been written in to their school’s PSHE schemes of work.

“This has been an amazing experience. In these young people you see laughter and teamwork but also a very powerful, dynamic sense of what’s right and wrong,” says Teacher attending student conference.

All Coventry schools now have some form of school council. The 2008/9 Communities that Care survey showed that 84 per cent of learners say they feel safe at school. Most have good friends, can talk to their parents about problems and are confident about their choices after leaving school. And nearly one in three had volunteered to help others.

Next steps

Currently, young people are being asked about Coventry’s Building Schools for the Future programme. School teachers can take part in ‘Teaching about controversial issues’, a new residential course for primary and secondary schools, with a case study on terrorism.

The council’s new community cohesion database will highlight schools that are not yet onboard. They will be offered training via groups of cluster schools.

The council is also developing a new student ambassadors’ programme, to create role models for younger pupils and strengthen students’ say in any new planning structures for the city.

And Balbir Sohal hopes to improve the sway of school councils within school communities:

“Although every school in Coventry now has a school council, these will only be truly effective if each has a budget and is involved in the school improvement plan.”

“We link the cross-curriculum dimensions, such as community participation and creative and critical thinking, with subjects such as citizenship, as well as partnership projects such as the Schools Linking Network.”

Balbir Sohal
Where to go for additional support

This guide has been developed in partnership with organisations involved in promoting community cohesion in schools. Case study schools were nominated by these organisations to show the difference community cohesion can make to learners.

The following organisations are among many that can offer additional support and guidance as you develop community cohesion using your own curriculum. Use the practical activities in this guide to help you get started, and the ideas and expertise of these organisations to help you open up possibilities and shape your compelling learning experiences.

Department for Children, Schools and Families

The DCSF published guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion in July 2007, which set out broadly how schools could contribute towards promoting community cohesion. To accompany the guidance the Department has also developed an online resource pack, which provides additional practical advice, information and support to help schools meet their new duty. There is information for school leaders, as well as links to a number of external websites and organisations that schools may find helpful.


Online resource pack published in May 2008, which can be found at www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/Communitycohesion.
National College for Leadership of Schools and Children’s Services

The National College for Leadership of Schools and Children’s Services (NCSL) provides a range of leadership development programmes, publications and resources to support and grow current and future school and children’s centre leaders. An online community cohesion resource will be available through its website from April 2010 to enable school leaders in particular to develop awareness and understanding of the complex area of community engagement. This resource aims to offer support, advice and guidance to help improve outcomes, consider the requirements of the 21st-century school vision and meet the requirements of the new Ofsted Framework with success and confidence. The resource can be found at www.ncsl.org.uk.

Training and Development Agency for Schools

The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) is strengthening the community cohesion support and guidance available for initial teacher training and continuing professional development, by for example:

- providing access to resources, research and evidence through the Teacher Training Resource Bank (www.ttrb.ac.uk)
- including further community cohesion guidance within the Qualified Teacher Status standards
- building community cohesion into its work with subject organisations in initial teacher training (ITT).

Further information is available at www.tda.gov.uk.

Who Do We Think We Are?

Who Do We Think We Are? is managed by a consortium of partners including the Association for Citizenship Teaching, Citizenship Foundation, Historical Association and the Royal Geographical Society, and is supported by key stakeholders including the Schools Linking Network. The project encourages schools to explore identity, diversity and citizenship and runs an annual Who Do We Think We Are? week.

Further information is available at www.wdwtwa.org.uk.
Institute of Community Cohesion

The Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) was established in 2005 to provide a new approach to race, diversity and multiculturalism. Its work focuses on building positive and harmonious community relations, using applied research to constantly develop practice and to build capacity of all the agencies and individuals involved.

For more information, visit www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk.

Schools Linking Network

SLN has at its core the aim of increasing understanding of identity and diversity and developing dialogue across the curriculum. Creative processes have played a crucial role in this work, which has evolved into a national programme that is now being adopted by more than 40 local authorities over a three-year period (2008–11). Through its National Gateway it is also supporting hundreds of individual schools who are making their own links across the country. SLN was launched in 2007 after two key reports highlighted the effectiveness of the Bradford school-linking model in developing meaningful and sustainable relationships between different communities in England.

Further information is available at www.schoolslinkingnetwork.org.uk.
Council for Subject Associations

The Council for Subject Associations (CfSA) is currently working with its members on a number of projects, drawing together their expertise. One project focuses on community cohesion and the prevention of violent extremism, with the purpose of directing subject teachers to resources that will raise their confidence to engage in discussion about issues relating to both. Resources have been produced to support teachers of the following subjects: art, craft and design, citizenship, English, geography, history, modern foreign languages, music, PSHE, special educational needs and RE.

Further information is available at www.subjectassociations.org.uk.
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency

QCDA develops and modernises the curriculum, assessments, examinations and qualifications. QCDA aims to develop a modern, world-class curriculum that will inspire and challenge all learners and prepare them for the future. To achieve this we work in partnership with many education organisations, including those represented in this publication. There are many opportunities to integrate community cohesion within the curriculum.

To find out more, visit the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.

Guidance and support is available to download from www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum, including:

1. the new programmes of study and attainment targets
2. tools for curriculum development and design
3. examples of the curriculum in action in schools and colleges across the country.

During the year we will be adding new tools and case studies to support you in implementing the new curriculum.
Other publications to support the new curriculum

For primary and secondary schools

1. **The global dimension in action** – a set of inspiring case studies and practical activities that show how to integrate global learning into your curriculum.

Ref: QCA/07/3410

2. **Sustainable development in action** – case studies and practical activities showing how to build sustainable development into the learning of your students.

Ref: QCA/08/4039

For the new secondary curriculum

3. **Cross-curriculum dimensions: a planning guide for schools** – a guide to help schools develop the seven dimensions in their curriculum. It includes an interactive curriculum aims table, showing schools how to link dimensions across the curriculum.

Ref: QCA/09/4066

4. **Disciplined curriculum innovation: making a difference to learners** – a seven-step process to help schools transform their curriculum so that it makes a positive impact on students’ lives, achievements and prospects.

Ref: QCA/08/3862

5. **Bringing greater coherence** – a guide to help you take a fresh look at your curriculum and how to make it even better for your learners.

Ref: QCA/09/4137

6. **The 11–19 curriculum from implementation to development** – a publication outlining evidence of changes made and their impact so far.

Ref: QCA/09/4397

All these publications can be downloaded from the National curriculum website at www.qcda.gov.uk/curriculum.

To order copies, go to www.qcda.gov.uk/orderline or phone the QCDA orderline on 0300 303 3015.
About this publication

Who is it for?
School leaders and teachers of all subjects in primary and secondary schools in England, local authority advisers.

What is it about?
How the curriculum can play a key part in promoting community cohesion within a school, its local community and the wider world.

What is it for?
To help schools build community cohesion into the learning experience of all their learners by providing practical activities and case studies.

Related publications
Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion, DCSF.
Learning together to be safe: a toolkit to help schools contribute to the prevention of violent extremism, DCSF www.dcsf.gov.uk/violentextremism.

For more copies
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