



# PSHE: updated, integrated, and assessed

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Compiled by Jenny Burrett for IAPS



# PSHE Education; Updated, Integrated and Assessed

## *A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Review from the IAPS Subject Adviser, Jenny Burrett*

It has been my pleasure to address the IAPS Education Committee recently, having previously discussed the content of this review with thirty-two representatives at our annual PSHE Education conference; representatives who are fully supportive of an approach to embed PSHE Education fully within the curriculum.

PSHE Education aims to develop a happy and learning child, whose positive physical and emotional self, character, interests and passions enable them to grow up in a climate of hope and optimism, prepared for the immediate and wider world. In accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Wellbeing should be firmly at the foundation. .

The DFE and PSHE Association see the PSHE curriculum as fundamental. According to the PSHE Association, it is *'a planned, developmental programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to demonstrate the intelligent behaviours needed to manage their lives now and in the future and make the most of opportunities presented to them. It needs to be part of a whole school approach to develop the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society. It helps to provide the skills and strategies, knowledge and understanding required to live healthy, safe, productive, capable, responsible and balanced lives. It encourages young people to be enterprising and supports them in making effective transitions, positive learning and career choices and in achieving economic wellbeing as well as teaching them to care about the wider world and the environment. It prepares them for the working and wider world. It provides opportunities for children and young people to reflect on and clarify their own values and attitudes and explore the complex and sometimes conflicting range of values and attitudes they encounter now and in the future. PSHE education contributes to personal development by helping pupils to build their confidence, resilience and self-esteem, and to identify and manage risk, make informed choices and understand what influences their decisions. It enables them to recognise, accept and shape their identities, to understand and accommodate difference and change, to manage emotions and to communicate constructively in a variety of settings.'*

There are so many crucial skills to develop as part of an all-round education:

- Teaching and modelling a healthy lifestyle, making good choices about food, drink, play, fun, rest and sleep, exercise and reflection all help us to maintain positive relationships and be self-motivated, productive and have a real sense of belonging.
- Staying safe and knowing how to ask for help are key aspects of early education which are constantly reinforced as a child grows towards greater independence.
- Understanding physical changes, social demands, pressure and rites of passage and knowing how to respond to these are key discussion areas in school as we seek to promote happiness.

- Parents are vitally involved, guiding and trying to model a successful lifestyle, whilst also working in partnership with the school.

Attaining and sustaining a healthy, happy approach to life is demanding as development, change and transition bring considerable challenge, often with a pressure to perform. Every opportunity provides scope for the body, mind and spirit to develop, leading to a greater understanding of self. Fitting in with others, being involved and having diverse experiences allows youngsters to see where they belong in the wider world. Understanding economic differences, climate, economies, war, disease, cultural differences, service, charitable giving and giving back, financial and entrepreneurial literacy all help expand the self in a broader context and make greater sense of activities and learning.

We should begin this understanding of where we belong in early education, where children naturally explore and learn through doing and exploring. Developing a child's role and sense of responsibility is key to their capacity to lead others in the future, and key to establishing happiness and success, along with characteristics such as adaptability, empathy, curiosity and confidence.

## The Curriculum

***PSHE Education is better delivered as part of a whole school curriculum (the new EQ Inspection demands a very real focus on personal development).***

Every **subject** that is studied contributes to that growth. According to the National Curriculum subject descriptors, **Mathematics** and the **Sciences** provide a foundation for understanding the world. **English** and **Drama** teach pupils to communicate their ideas and emotions to each other. **Reading** allows for the acquisition of knowledge and a chance to develop culturally, emotionally, intellectually, socially and spiritually. **Computing** links deeply with mathematics, science, and design and technology to provide insights into both natural and artificial systems.

The future undoubtedly needs digitally literate pupils who can programme and grasp computational thinking, with the creativity to understand and change the world.

**Geography** provides knowledge about diverse places, people, resources and natural and human environments, together with a deep understanding of the Earth's key physical and human processes, and over time, their interaction and the formation and use of landscapes and environments.

**History** should equip pupils to develop perspective and judgement, helping them to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

Learning a **foreign language** widens our horizons, allowing us to know of other cultures, peoples and jobs and ultimately enables us to communicate at so many levels and in various languages.

**Music, art, craft and design** should engage and inspire pupils to find self-expression, develop a love of the subjects and of their talent, so increasing their self-confidence, creativity, critical engagement and sense of achievement.

**Physical Education** should inspire all pupils to be active, to participate and for many, to succeed or excel in competitive sport and other physically-demanding challenges. It should provide opportunities for pupils to become physically and mentally confident in a way which supports their health and fitness and provide opportunities to cooperate whilst supporting the values of fairness and respect.

There is little doubt that the study of different **world religions and philosophies**, community worship and thanksgiving, learning about community and citizenship help young people understand the meaning of belonging. They learn about the varied institutions that support communities locally, nationally and globally. Children should recognise the importance of voluntary, community and pressure groups, especially in relation to health and wellbeing, and to appreciate the range of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom. They are encouraged to think about people living in other places, and those with different values and customs, such that resources can be re-allocated fairly. Such economic choices affect individuals, communities and the sustainability of the environment. It is vital that children experience the value of making their contribution, whilst building their skills in preparation for financial independence and the workplace. Enterprise awards, especially those with a service element, leadership opportunities, giving back and money management within particular business opportunities or fund-raising purposes can create a wonderfully integrated learning project.

## **The Character Curriculum**

We do not need a separate character curriculum, as has been suggested by some. Our school experience itself develops character. Professor Guy Claxton confirms that our schools can prepare young people for the challenges and uncertainties of the real world through the 'seven Cs' when he talks about **character, creativity, curiosity, confidence, collaboration, communication, commitment** and **craftsmanship** in children. These Cs certainly have the capacity to grow well-balanced citizens who are ready and willing to take on challenge. The opportunities described in this article show the diversity ideas and areas in which children can create, have a go, take a risk, be motivated with focused participation, make decisions, show initiative and independence, drive and ambition in an optimistic and positive way.

Apart from acquiring skills and knowledge through many different experiences, we are told in the National Curriculum that pupils will learn to be curious, reason, predict, analyse, collaborate, communicate, appreciate, develop their creativity, empathy, confidence, perspective and judgement, as well as embed important values.

The DfE does not prescribe character, but has described it as a set of traits, attributes and behaviours, such as: perseverance, resilience and grit; confidence and optimism; motivation, drive and ambition; neighbourliness and community spirit; tolerance and respect; honesty, integrity and dignity; conscientiousness, curiosity and focus.

Encouraging pupils to explore this development, the outcomes of their education, through creating and communicating a language of learning is helpful, as is a leadership scheme that seeks to develop self-responsibility and other characteristics. Our schools can provide a comprehensive record of the development of our young

leaders and learners. These attributes are highly marketable to prospective parents too!

## **An updated, integrated, assessed whole school approach to PSHE Education**

Trying to weave together the plethora of skills and knowledge already mentioned above in a PSHE programme could, at worst, be artificial and contrived. To weave this in to other subjects makes so much sense.

A top quality, integrated education should build character in a child, to enhance empathy, understanding and tolerance for others, but 'Integrated' is the key word. The curriculum has to be carefully mapped to recognise where the real opportunities for growth are to help pupils make links and make sense of this very complex world.

Teachers need to create learning environments where there is high engagement, challenge and meaningful learning, either through discrete subjects or, even better, mapped or linked for greater impact. Parents can work together with schools to support children as they grow. As long as our young learners and leaders find the solutions, for example through STEM subjects, projects, international and economic leadership and understanding in order to sustain our world, even averting global problems like climate change, the future looks bright!

With thanks for your interest and if you need any help with this at all, do get back to me.

Yours sincerely,

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