

Articulating your strategy to promote community cohesion

The following sample statements have been collected from schools in Northumberland who effectively articulate their strategy to promote community cohesion.

They have been grouped here with the aim of supporting schools to respond to the guidance to Ofsted inspectors and are therefore key in helping your school evaluate its contribution to community cohesion.

Inspectors should take account of:

- The quality of the school's analysis of its context
- The extent to which leaders and managers have placed due emphasis on each of the three strands of religion, ethnicity and the socio-economic dimension in shaping the school's response to its analysis
- The extent to which the school has taken appropriate actions to contribute to community cohesion within the school and beyond
- The quality, and use made, of the school's evaluation of its work across the three strands
- Evidence of the impact of the school's work on outcomes, for instance in the quality of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Evidence of the impact of the school's work in the local community.

Opening statements

The needs and cohesiveness of the school's community are very well evidenced in all areas of the duty. We perceive our contribution to be excellent.

The school is characterised by a strong spirit of community and staff, current and former learners recognise this special dimension.

Every member of the school community feels a sense of belonging and is valued. This is an inclusive school which provides similar life opportunities for all pupils, regardless of their background.

Teaching, learning and curriculum

The 'Identity and Diversity: living together in the UK' strand of citizenship education is being implemented to help our young people to learn to understand others, value diversity and promote shared values.

The diversity of UK culture is reflected in the curriculum. This includes; cultural appreciation, influences on language, migration histories and recognising commonalities.

The school embraces the LA vision to be outward looking, by actively promoting opportunities to experience the diversity of cultures and perspectives that

characterise global citizens.

The school encourages interaction with different people as a means of helping pupils develop an understanding of commonality and respect for difference.

The heritage of all of our pupils is recognised and appreciated through teaching and learning as an aspect of their emerging and changing identities.

Peer learning and leadership promote positive gender role models and challenge stereotypes.

Pupils understand and take part in democratic decision making, as a means of understanding a shared vision of goals that benefit everyone equally.

The school is committed to curriculum projects to develop links between the schools in our partnership and other schools in the same phase.

A diverse range of community representatives offer the pupils opportunities to interact with people of different ages, genders and backgrounds, and challenge stereotypes.

We have responded to the expectations of aspirational parents by identifying specific targeted groups such as the 'Reach for the Stars' cohort.

The cohesiveness of the UK community is addressed via the curriculum.

The school's involvement in the ASDAN accreditation and KS4 Engagement programmes has reached those in danger of social and academic exclusion and stimulated those students to greater involvement in school e.g. better attendance, higher attainment and achievement (see GCSE results 2008) and a reduction in the small numbers of persistent absentees. This has involved students in special educational needs and ethnic minority cohorts.

The structure of our curriculum enables teachers to embed overarching themes of humanity, citizenship and identity and link these closely to the pupils' own interests and cultural experiences and emerging sense of themselves as global citizens.

We develop opportunities to build understanding and empathy by creating opportunities for pupils to interact with people from different backgrounds as part of their learning.

The school's identity and ethos is an important influence in demonstrating values of social responsibility, fundamental equality principles and recognising commonalities.

Educational and social experiences are enjoyed by all, including the wider Community

Our induction programme for all new staff has recently been revised, particularly with regard to school values and our vision of community.

CPD for senior and middle leaders was delivered by the LA's Cultural Diversity in Education team resulting in an audit of our provision and a heightened awareness across curriculum areas concerning current and future provision for community cohesion matters including global citizenship.

Skills for participating in society are established and reinforced in all of the aspects of teaching, learning and participation in activities inside and out of school.

Values and rights are intrinsic to our ethos, and teachers meet the challenge of teaching controversial issues, and extending pupils' horizons.

Pupils recognise and challenge inequalities and use the vocabulary of rights with confidence.

Pupils have experience of democratic decision making, and understand its significance in society.

Pupils share the school's vision of a diverse, inclusive, tolerant and equitable society. The PSHE curriculum explicitly teaches the appreciation and valuing of diversity as well as the understanding of human rights and these themes underpin all subject areas, e.g. the exploration of diversity within texts studied in English, SOW in R.E. Many opportunities exist for learners to develop their leadership skills (e.g. Young Leaders; delegates in a range of areas; School Council).

The school has a healthy SSCO programme which involves learners in positive sporting activities and builds links through sport within the community.

The school has significantly developed learners' understanding of global and European communities through its partnerships with...

Interaction

Community links are promoted via the school, and precipitate the ease with which mobile pupils and their families settle.

Pupils who demonstrate cultural sensitivity and awareness are actively commended and encouraged.

Strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds within the school, its local community, and the national and global communities.

The school monitors participation in extended services activity, and ensures that pupils with a disability are achieving their entitlement.

Through extended services and other activities, the school enables parents to share positive experiences with their children.

Strategies have been introduced to improve the reputation of the school in the local

community.

The school promotes interaction by creating opportunities for different groups to share facilities and resources and work together.

Teaching staff are given the opportunity to work with pupils from different Backgrounds.

Pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of their Community

The local community communicates with and supports many aspects of school life, and school reciprocates with initiatives such as....

Families tell us how key the school is not only to the integration of the child, but to the integration of the whole family in the community.

A Parent Support Worker and an Extended Services Co-ordinator have impacted on different sectors of the school (and wider community). Engagement in school activities has improved.

Learners make valuable contributions to the wider community.

The school is at the heart of its community and is open 360 days of the year and its facilities can be booked by community groups.

Every effort is made to make sure that hard to reach groups engage effectively in the school's community.

The full core offer for extended services is in place across the partnership.

The school works in close collaboration with the three partner schools, special school and Children's Centre to offer a wide range of services to meet the diverse needs of our community. (see Extended Services report).

The school works effectively with a wide range of partner agencies,
The school has excellent links with the surrounding business community, helping us to promote an inclusive achievement culture.

Links to equality and diversity

Learners from different backgrounds are always given a warm and inclusive welcome and induction by the school and wider community.

School buddy systems, school council and the influence of the student voice all contribute significantly to the promotion of cohesion in our community.

The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued.

Our partnership of schools is acting to improve procedures for the transition of pupils between phases, ensuring that previous achievements (whether social, emotional, physical or academic) are recognised and built upon.

Pupil voice throughout the school develops the skills of participation and responsible Action.

Equalities policies have all been recently reviewed, are compliant with the law and demonstrate the school's strategic approach to promoting community cohesion. Equity is promoted through the adoption of a robust single equalities scheme adopted from a Local Authority model.

The school has recently updated its policies and procedures with regard to equalities and diversity and the subsequent action plans are being implemented in curriculum, learning & teaching, leadership and extended services.

Systemic bias is challenged wherever it is perceived to exist or emerge in the culture of the school.

This school is committed to preparing its 'mainly white' pupils to live in, and contribute to, a diverse and multi-cultural society.

Our community is less culturally diverse than others in the region; therefore challenging perceptions and stereotypes is regarded with high importance.

Promoting high standards of behaviour in the school and developing a sense of personal responsibility in our pupils is regarded as a key contributor to community cohesion.

Hard to reach groups (EAL, disabled, BME, looked after, services children and their carers and families) make welcome contributions to curriculum delivery, policy planning and practical suggestions about the role of the school within the community.

The attendance of families, carers and community representatives at school events and ceremonies is very good.

Volunteers who offer their time in school, and provide opportunities to interact with diverse role models include; knitters, musicians, cooks and archaeologists, as well as governors with a background in international development.

Behaviour management practices and policies have positively contributed to cohesion including a zero tolerance approach to racist incidents.

Behaviour, anti racist and anti bullying policies reflect and reinforce behaviour for positive relationships.

Pupils, staff and parents understand their responsibilities and respect and behaviour are generally excellent.

Attainment data is analysed half termly, and the school is adopting APP.

There is a tangible commitment to eliminating variable outcomes on the basis of; gender, SEN, EAL, looked after children, services/mobile pupils.

Strategies are in place to close achievement gaps.

Behaviour support, literacy support, psychological services, parent support partners are among the local authority teams that support our children and their families.

Pupils' self esteem is high and they are confident that they will be listened to.

The most recent Cocentra survey (February 2008) highlights excellent practice in this area, e.g. both the statements "I get on well with other students in the school" and "My school teaches me to respect different backgrounds, races and religions" were identified as a major strengths as over 85% of learners strongly agreed with these performance criteria. The Cocentra parental survey of the same year demonstrates extremely high levels of satisfaction on every community dimension.

Future actions/capacity to improve

For example:

- School linking project: offering the pupils and staff an opportunity to collaborate with children in a different area of the UK, developing and increasing their understanding of national identity.
- Increase community use of school
- Increase opportunities for parents to be involved in the teaching and learning in school.
- Collecting more qualitative evidence of impact (surveys, interviews, attendance at events etc).