

PSHE Association Case Study Series

About this case study series

This series of nine case studies has been produced by the PSHE Association under its grant from the Department for Education. The aim of the series is to highlight excellent practice in PSHE education and to try to understand more about the links between outstanding PSHE provision and outstanding whole school judgements in section 5 Ofsted inspections, as highlighted in the [2013 Ofsted report on PSHE education](#).

While the schools we are highlighting are very different, including special schools, primary and secondary schools from around England, each case study starts with a factual overview of the school and the Headteacher's view about how PSHE education contributes to the life of the school. There is then an analysis of the quality of PSHE education in the school by the PSHE Association.

The case study then looks at how the school believes PSHE education has contributed to key areas of the Ofsted inspection framework and to being judged an 'outstanding school'.

We are very grateful to all the schools that agreed to take part in this project.

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre

Area: Gloucestershire

School website: <http://www.newent.gloucs.sch.uk>

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The School's Context

Unlike other schools in our research, this case study does not focus on a school judged by Ofsted to be 'outstanding'. In January 2013 the school had been judged 'inadequate' and placed into special measures. All judgements had been 'inadequate', with the exception of behaviour and safety that had been judged 'in need of improvement'.

In their last Ofsted inspection, in January 2014, the school was judged 'good' overall and this case study outlines how PSHE was at the heart of the school's dramatic improvement.

Newent Community School and Sixth Form Centre, in Newent near Gloucester, has 1235 pupils on role. In 2014 Ofsted described the school as:

- Larger than average. The proportion of students who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported at school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The headteacher, who had previously been deputy headteacher, started in her new role from April 2013. At that time two assistant headteachers were promoted to acting deputy headteachers.

Under this new leadership the school has progressed from being in 'special measures' to 'good' in every judgement in just 12 months. The school has placed PSHE education at the centre of its work and believes this has made a significant contribution to achieving its new status.

Having been placed in special measures, Ofsted did not focus specifically on PSHE education in the early stages of their monitoring of the school. However as the school's journey to 'good' continued, Ofsted's inspection of PSHE education became increasingly significant.

In 2014 key findings included

- Relationships between staff and students are excellent and the behaviour around school and in lessons is good.
- Students say they feel safe and well cared for. The school responds well to relevant issues regarding the personal safety of students as a focus for assemblies and lessons.

The perspective of the Head/senior leadership team

The PSHE programme has the full support and commitment of the new headteacher and the school's senior leadership team. One of the school's deputy headteachers is a permanent member of the school's PSHE education department.

The aim of the school's PSHE education is to support the school's overall aim to '...develop mature, confident and thoughtful citizens.' Significantly the first page of the school's prospectus prominently draws attention to the provision of '..a thorough programme of Personal, Social and Health Education for all students as well as Citizenship, Work Experience, Enterprise Education and Careers Guidance.'

Why we feel PSHE is outstanding in this school

A highly experienced teacher coordinates the PSHE education programme and has been seconded part-time in an advisory role with the local authority, working closely with the Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning team.

The coordinator has regular contact with her school's pastoral team, where the monitoring of both pupil behaviour and pastoral concerns can be quickly reflected in the taught PSHE education programme. The school has produced a comprehensive, developmental and highly flexible scheme of work, drawing on elements of published resources and those produced by the coordinator. All lessons have clear learning objectives and intended outcomes and provide illustrations of how learning can be differentiated to meet different pupils' needs.

A key part of the coordinator's role within her local authority is the production of new PSHE education teaching material for Gloucestershire schools. This joint role means that resources are being developed in a school setting, allowing for rapid piloting and a strong student engagement in evaluation.

The entire programme, including enrichment material and models of assessment are available on the school's database. PSHE education teachers therefore have immediate access to resources, a rich range of pedagogy and assessment material.

The programme uses topics to provide a relevant context for the development of language and skills. A good illustration is a major project undertaken by pupils into dementia, leading to pupils working in local primary schools to raise awareness. In this way, pupils had the chance not only to develop their understanding of dementia, but also their presentation skills and empathy.

Critically Newent's PSHE programme is strongly 'data-driven'. All schools in Gloucestershire undertake annual research into their pupils' health behaviour and their expressed values, beliefs and opinions. This research has been in place for 12 years as part of the authority's Healthy Schools/ Healthy Living and Learning programme. Schools receive their own current data, how this compares to their own historical data and a comparison with other schools in the authority.

This wealth of data allows the school to constantly refocus their attention to reflect the changing needs, beliefs and behaviour of their pupils. Access to longitudinal data enables them to monitor the impact of any intervention. Combined with the regular in-school liaison with the pastoral team, the programme is highly responsive to changing evidence.

PSHE education in the school is strongly linked with the development cycle demanded by Gloucestershire's Healthy Living and Learning team. This 'baseline, target, intervention, impact' cycle brings focus to the programme.

PSHE education is treated as a 'subject' in the curriculum. The school has a two week timetable and each week has a 50 minute PSHE lesson for all pupils. The new leadership team chose to continue to invest time in this subject even when the school was placed in 'special measures', resisting the temptation to reduce curriculum time for PSHE to be used elsewhere.

PSHE education lessons are enriched by 'drop-down days' with a variety of 'visitors', bringing additional expertise to topics covered in the planned programme. All enrichment days are supported by both pre and post work in PSHE education lessons.

PSHE education is taught by a specialist team of seven experienced teachers, the majority being full-time PSHE education specialists, and there are two dedicated PSHE classrooms. As a department they have the same schedule of departmental meetings and CPD opportunities as all other departments. Significantly, one member of this team is one of the school's deputy heads. His commitment to the subject and membership of the team adds credibility to the programme and ensures the subject is fully represented at senior leadership meetings.

Although there are PSHE specialists and a dedicated PSHE education programme, this team is part of a wider department called 'PDFC' (Personal Development and Future Choices) that ensures continuity between PSHE education, citizenship, careers and work-related learning. This larger department collaborates in the planning and teaching of the drop-down days, providing learning that helps pupils connect up and deepen their learning in each subject area.

The school has vertical tutor groups. Whilst this has brought the benefits of building strong relationships across year groups this setting would be inappropriate for teaching PSHE education that reflects the needs and readiness of pupils.

The teaching of PSHE education has the same expectations concerning assessment as all other subjects. There is robust assessment undertaken through a comprehensive marking schedule, including pupils' self-reflection and assessment, peer and teacher assessment. Pupils have specific targets set for PSHE education recording their learning and progress in a personal workbook. The data-base provides the PSHE education team with a variety of assessment tools to assist pupils in self-reflection and self-assessment, including material to support both pre (baseline) and prior learning and the assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills.

There are frameworks with clear learning outcomes to support peer assessment and clear, structured and comprehensive guidance to ensure that peer assessment provides the opportunity for pupils to develop the skills of both good listening and giving effective feedback. In this way, peer assessment is linked with both the learner's and the assessor's development.

PSHE education is subject to the same scrutiny as all other subjects, with book monitoring and lesson observations being undertaken by the co-ordinator. New teachers joining the PSHE team are provided with comprehensive teaching material and one-to-one CPD, monitoring and guidance from the coordinator.

Reporting to parents takes the form of reporting on pupil's attitude to learning and engagement in PSHE education.

How PSHE contributed to success in the Ofsted inspection

The school expects PSHE education lessons be taught with the same rigor as all other lessons. Combined with the expertise and experience of the PSHE education team, this meant that all PSHE education lessons observed were judged 'good' or 'outstanding' in its most recent inspection.

Ofsted noted:

Teachers' questioning is a strength, particularly how teachers use questions to challenge the thinking of the most able. Students are expected to explain their answers. This ensures they acquire a good understanding of their work as well as developing their speaking and listening skills.

The school believes that PSHE education provides the most relevant context for building teamwork, enquiry, speaking and listening skills. The school believes that the skills being developed in PSHE education are transferring more effectively to the wider curriculum. The strong approach the school takes to assessment in PSHE education helps to evidence this learning.

In their 2014 inspection, learning within PSHE education provided considerable evidence leading to Ofsted's judgement that **'The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.'**

Students have a good understanding of the key issues of keeping safe, appropriate to their age. This includes aspects of e-safety, sexual health and of substance abuse, including cigarettes and alcohol.

The school ensures students understand the risks of stress when preparing for examinations or when under pressure.

Assemblies and personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons are adapted to take account of any issues which are relevant, for example discussing issues around self-harming...

Students know about the different types of bullying, including issues around single sex relationships and transgender. They are aware that staff challenge any student who makes inappropriate comments or uses expressions like 'gay' as a form of abuse.

Both the coordinator and her deputy head believe PSHE education is making a substantial contribution to the strong relationships within the school. PSHE education provides excellent opportunities for pupil voice, demonstrating the value the school places on respecting and responding to the real life needs of their pupils.

The PSHE education team works in co-operation with other departments to create cross-curricular learning that is relevant to young people. For example the IT team provides technical learning about on-line safety, the PSHE education team explores the emotional and social aspects and the Drama team provides stimulus and opportunities to develop and rehearse strategies and skills.

Ofsted stated,

“Students’ excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced across all subjects...as part of internet awareness week students performing a drama presentation on the dangers of sending sexually explicit images from phones (sexting). Aspects of sexual exploitation have also been discussed and important information is made available to parents and carers through the school’s website.”

We would like to thank all the staff and students at Newent Community College and Sixth Form for making us welcome and giving us a valuable insight into their PSHE education programme.