

Articles, PDFs and Reports

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Conflict in the Middle East – issues for schools (NUT guidance)

This is a review of the guidance published by the NUT in 2009; they have since updated this guidance, and a link to the updated version is given below.

[Advice from the National Union of Teachers - February 2009](#)

[Advice from the National Union of Teacher – May 2015](#)

Gateway: [4.3a](#)

This document details issues that may arise in schools as a result of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict and offers advice on ways to confront these controversies. It is not a guide to the historical, political or religious issues that surround the conflict. Although this is a very useful article in terms of the guidance it provides, it will need to be used with other resources.

The document outlines many of the challenges that could arise in schools and then offers advice from both the whole school and classroom teachers' perspective. There are also specific strategies aimed at subjects such as RE and citizenship, although much of the subject matter may already be dealt with in a school's RE curriculum. The last section offers a list of useful websites to guide teachers in dealing with anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and controversial issues.

One of the most useful sections in this document is "Teaching about Controversial issues." Although the focus of this piece is the Israeli – Palestinian conflict, this section would be a good starting point when dealing with any controversial issues. It reminds teachers of their statutory requirements: "Teachers are bound by law not to promote partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in schools" The Education Act, 1996 (Sections 406 and 407). In addition it gives guidance on how to do this in the form of bullet points. It also encourages schools to provide opportunities for all pupils to think about controversial issues and formulate their own views in a safe space. There is another list giving teachers useful tips, and strategies when responding to pupils' questions on controversial topics.

Connect: different faiths, shared values (Inter Faith Network)

[Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values](#)

Gateway [1.8](#)

The guide, produced by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, encourages young people to get involved in interfaith activity and to build bridges between communities.

The guide presents a number of good practical ideas in order to encourage young people to initiate and arrange their own contacts and events with people of other faiths. Consideration has been given to a number of important aspects that people need to be aware of when arranging a multi-faith gathering e.g. appropriate refreshments, tips on speaking about faith and religious topics. A brief reference is also made to fifteen interesting case studies of young people's involvement in multi-faith activities.

The 'Making it happen' and 'Resource' sections will support young people and schools to arrange interfaith discussion and events. The 'Good to Talk' section in particular provides useful ideas for teachers on how to deal with discussion on controversial issues in the classroom.

A very readable, nicely presented document that will certainly appeal to young people and teachers alike.

Education for citizenship, diversity and race equality (Citizenship Foundation)

[Education for citizenship, diversity and race equality](#) (2003 revised edition) D. Rowe

Gateway: [2.7/2.8](#)

This seventy-page document was originally commissioned in 2001 from the citizenship foundation and 'me too', the anti-discrimination charity, to support citizenship teachers addressing diversity and race equality issues. For the purposes of REsilience, this resource has particular relevance to Gateway documents 2.7 and 2.8: 'Encourage pupils to express their own ideas and beliefs in a sensitive and respectful way, even when those ideas and beliefs are negative or controversial'; and 'Challenging prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping'.

Part 1 focuses on teaching and learning. It provides useful summaries and contexts for multi-cultural and anti-racist approaches, and goes on to highlight the need to broaden perspectives on what constitutes prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping. It includes a section discussing six practical approaches to teaching and learning about diversity, tolerance and race equality, based on analysis of practice, curriculum materials and discussions with teachers. There is also a suggested planning framework for a race equality intervention.

Part 2 is a comprehensive guide to resources (all published since 1990). Whilst there will be a wealth of material developed since the 2003 update that needs to be considered, many of these resources will still prove useful to teachers focusing on these issues.

Engaging Young Muslims in Learning

[Engaging Young Muslims in Learning - Learning Skills Council](#)

Gateway [3.4](#)

Although this piece of research is ten years old now, it is interesting to re-read it in the light of the REsilience Project.

It may well help teachers, particularly those with little experience of teaching about Islam, or those not familiar with working in a context with Muslim young people and their families, to gain insight and understanding regarding Muslim beliefs and approaches to life and learning.

For example, if a young person believes there is "one right route in life", will this make them less likely to take risks in their learning, or be afraid to make mistakes, or not want to admit their need for help? If the family, rather than the individual, is central to decision-making and there are specific expectations placed on the student from them, what might be the implications if this causes tension between the family and the school or the family and the student, or indeed all three?

The section "What difference does being a Muslim make?" shares the responses from Muslim young people and considers the implications for Further Education Institutions. The same issues and considerations will be shared by schools.

This is a useful refresher.

Everyone matters in the classroom. A practice code for teachers of RE

[Everyone matters in the classroom. A practice code for teachers of RE](#) (2009), Religious Education Council of England and Wales

Gateways: [1.2](#), [1.3](#), [3.4](#)

This short document was created in 2009 to complement the revised Code of Conduct and Practice for Registered Teachers produced by the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE). It was put together by an RE Council working group with representatives from NATRE, AREIAC, NASACRE and several religious/non-religious belief traditions.

The primary aim of the document is to support teachers of RE in demonstrating the fourth principle contained in the GTCE code which says that teachers will 'demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality'. This document outlines how teachers of RE can do this when dealing with religious and non-religious beliefs in the classroom.

Like the GTCE document, this document is organised around eight principles. Alongside each of the principles the authors have given exemplification of how this principle might be worked through in a classroom or demonstrated by a teacher of RE.

The eight guiding principles are:

1. *Respect persons*
2. *Value reason-giving*
3. *Practise reciprocity*
4. *Accept contestability and value self-awareness*
5. *Be open*
6. *Promote fair and accurate representation*
7. *Model life-long learning*
8. *Promote balance*

The exemplification given is sometimes practical suggestions for classroom activities but is more often concerned with the attitude and practice of the teacher. The exemplification feels very brief for some of the principles, so it would be necessary and helpful for mentors to encourage teachers to further develop these ideas for their own classrooms and students.

Faith, citizenship and shared life in Britain today (Inter Faith Network)

[Faith, Citizenship and Shared Life in Britain Today: a discussion document](#)

Gateways [1.8](#), [4.7](#)

This discussion document by the Inter Faith Network for the UK raises a number of issues in relation to the place of religions and identity in society in Britain today. The key fundamental questions raised in the document relate to the place of faith communities within our society, the nature of citizenship and 'Britishness' and the different ways in which people belong to, and shape life in Britain today.

A brief discussion on the changing character of Britain's population sets the context for the discussion. Of particular relevance to the REsilience project is the discussion on citizenship, identity and belonging. Detailed discussions are presented about 'being British' that relate to balancing inclusivity and diversity, overlapping loyalties of place and culture, and the evolving sense of Britishness, as well as the sense

of distinctiveness of society in Britain. Reference is also made to underpinning values shared by faith communities and how they could impact on engagement and mutual understanding.

As the introductory section notes, the document does not intend to present one agreed view on some of the issues raised. What is presented in the paper is a number of discussion points that relate to the fundamental questions. These discussion points encourage the reader to reflect on the issues raised.

This will be a useful document for teachers when reflecting on the agenda linked to community cohesion and around issues of identity, tradition and belonging.

Guidance on dealing with the BNP and other radical groups in school

Gateway [2.1/2.4](#)

[Dealing with the British National Party and other radical groups: guidance for schools](#)

Review 1

Following a mock election process in a school in the North of England which, following parental and BNP complaints, led to a head teacher having to answer claims that she was undemocratic, this document was prepared to identify the key issues and arguments to enable schools to set up a policy supporting teachers in challenging BNP attitudes from students.

It begins with a clear exposition of Human Rights legislation governing freedom of conscience and draws a distinction between lawful – although radical – groups and unlawful groups and the difficulties in “outlawing” them.

The paper then moves on to explore a variety of strategies that allow teachers to assist students in exploring issues surrounding racist extremism within the context of British democracy whilst challenging the unacceptable attitudes that students may espouse.

This document has a clear relevance in supporting teachers and schools who lack confidence in challenging extremism. However, its usefulness might be further enhanced in practice through a discussion of the relevant strategies with the teachers to identify which approach might work best in this particular school, and why?

Review 2

This very detailed and thoroughly referenced document offers strategies for dealing with the contentious issue of extremism in the classroom. It arose from the problems raised when a school decided to run a “mock” general election inviting in the three main political parties, but not the BNP. The head was accused of acting undemocratically. The dilemma? Where does the school’s duty lie when encouraging open discussion of policies and practices which some regard as ‘racist’, and appear to contradict its statutory duty to promote race equality and community cohesion?

Strongly stressed is the duty upon teachers to help students understand concepts and arguments used in debates and to equip them with the skills and dispositions to engage in rational, democratic debate. Also stressed is the importance for students to understand what various parties actually stand for, not what it is commonly assumed they stand for. Also highlighted is the wide disagreement around issues such as immigration, race and racism, as well as of the meanings of the very words themselves.

Terms such as ‘extremism’ and ‘radical’ are clearly explained. Ideas and strategies for managing discussions on contentious issues within the classroom are offered as well as approaches to confronting extremism within and without the classroom.

An Appendix refers to the Education Act (1996) and Race Relations (Amendment) Act, (2000).

Although lengthy (16 pages), this document would be very helpful to mentors needing to suggest strategies in dealing with contentious issues in the classroom.

Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion

[Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion](#) (2007) Department for Children, Schools and Families

Gateway: [3.3](#)

Section 21(4) of the Education Act 2002 (as inserted by section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) states that:

'The governing body of a maintained school shall, in discharging their functions relating to the conduct of the school —

- a) promote the well-being of pupils at the school, and*
- b) in the case of a school in England, promote community cohesion.'*

The DCSF document, *Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion*, was published in 2007 to support schools in fulfilling this duty.

It is important to stress that a school's duty to promote community cohesion is not about provision; nor is it about outcomes for pupils. It is about leadership and management – at every level. Clearly, religious education has a vital role to play in promoting community cohesion, and heads of RE must take the initiative in leading community cohesion but this role must be firmly set in the school's development plan.

There are three stages to work through:

- 1. developing an understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the school's community in a local, national and global context*
- 2. planning and taking an appropriate set of actions based on an analysis of its context*
- 3. demonstrating the impact of its actions and that they have a positive impact on community cohesion within the school and beyond.*

It is precisely because the duty is that of the governing body that it is empowering for leaders of religious education in schools. These documents give them mandate to work closely with their senior leadership team in spearheading this vital part of their school's work.

Identity, diversity and citizenship

[Identity, diversity and citizenship](#) (2007) Ted Huddleston, Association for Citizenship Teaching

Gateway: [2.11](#)

Contents:

A critical overview of existing citizenship resources produced by a range of providers, in all formats - books, DVD and websites - over a 10-year period. These resources include those for anti-racist, human rights and multicultural education as well as R.E. and other curriculum areas. The article goes into considerable detail about the issues covered by these resources. Topics include personal and social

identity, national identity and Britishness, patriotism and Commonwealth and Empire. It also deals with the concept of diversity in some depth and gives examples of resources in each category, with some critical comment on their usefulness and suitability. It goes on to consider issues around immigration and asylum and religious identity and diversity. It raises issues teachers may want to highlight when using specific resources.

Usefulness and relevance:

The content is useful because it defines key terms and poses interesting questions that teachers could use when planning lessons. It may provide ideas for ordering resources and will help in suggesting a range of materials that teachers can use in the classroom. This resources review will refocus RE specialists towards some of the theory that underpins their pedagogy. It may also be a good 'way in' for non-RE specialists to access information on some of the important themes and ideas which underpin much of the REsilience project's philosophy.

Including pupils' faith backgrounds in primary religious education

[Support for Learning 19 \(3\)](#) (2004) Ipgrave, J

Gateway: [2.2](#)

Ipgrave believes that 'an inclusive religious education is not one that ignores or tries to iron out differences; it is one that provides a structure within which differences can meet and listen to and learn from each other.' In order to discuss how we can arrive at this type of RE the author sets out to answer two questions:

1. How is this atmosphere [where pupils feel valued and where they learn to respect each other and each other's right to be different] to be achieved where the area being studied is as sensitive, and as notoriously prone to misunderstanding and division, as religion?
2. How can the teacher find a way of delivering RE so that it both respects the integrity of each individual and promotes the harmony of the group?

Her research and discussion focuses on primary education but her findings and conclusions are equally applicable in the secondary school. Her focus on primary education is because the answers presented stem from her work as a class teacher in a multicultural primary school in inner city Leicester. She presents her answers under three headings: integrity, harmony, and safety.

Integrity

Here, Ipgrave deals with the relation between the teaching and learning in RE and the individual student. She proposes that many RE teachers already attempt to reflect the religious identity of their students in the RE curriculum. Ipgrave does not think that this alone is sufficient; she proposes that the diversity and complexity in religion is not given enough recognition in RE delivery. She discusses her research where she found that many students do not recognise themselves, their parents, or their religious tradition in RE teaching. This is not simply an issue of representing religions in all their diversity and complexity but it is also necessary to include and value the religious and spiritual understandings of the students. She leaves us with a set of questions to help us to think more carefully through this issue.

Harmony

She then moves from the relation between RE and the individual to the relations between RE and the group. She proposes a particular teaching approach to RE that would suit classes where there are willing 'insiders' from a religious tradition. She outlines a way to promote harmony and peer teaching that many will be interested in.

Safety

This harmony though is not to be arrived at by simply presenting an RE curriculum which is 'a benign tour of picturesque forms of life' (Williams, Rowan). Ipgrave suggests that 'religion, as experienced by many of the children in our classes, is not benign: it has power, challenge and danger.' For Ipgrave, if

we are to teach good RE that leads to respect for others and for their own beliefs, we cannot shy away from controversial issues e.g. jihad. The article then presents us with some suggestions for shared rules for discussions so that these controversial issues can be dealt with safely.

Islamophobia – issues, challenges and action

[Islamophobia – issues, challenges and action](#) (2004) A report by the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia. Richardson, R (ed), Trentham Books in association with the Uniting Britain Trust

Gateways: [4.4](#), [4.5](#)

This 2004 report is very stimulating and challenging, and the issues it raises are still relevant six years later. The report is divided into two parts.

Part one is about the 'issues and challenges'. The report argues that Islamophobia is a form of racism and that as Jews and Sikhs have protection under current legislation so should Muslims. It discusses the impact of 9:11 and the war in Iraq on attitudes towards Muslims as a whole, and on the sense that many Muslims have of alienation from the rest of 'British society'. This is partly a result of the media's presentation of Islam, the ready equation of 'Islam = terrorism', the use of anti-terror laws and internment of Muslims and the feeling that any individual Muslim is (somehow) 'personally responsible' for any/every act of terror throughout the world. Muslims have become a ready scapegoat for the ills of society. The inclusion of extracts from a variety of interviews and publications is very useful – and would provide a valuable teaching resource for any work on prejudice, discrimination and racism in secondary schools. The discussion on 'open' and 'closed' minds is fascinating and would be useful in GCSE courses.

Part two is about 'action' – what actions can be taken across areas such as the criminal justice system, employment, social services, education, and within the local neighbourhood. The report also contains a very interesting section on 'dealing with the media' and proposes the development of a code of professional ethics. This recognises how most people's knowledge and understanding of Islam comes through the images and headlines of the media. The chapter on 'counting' is a valuable resource when considering statistics and raises powerful issues and questions. For teachers, the section on 'Identity and education' is possibly the most pertinent. Again, it raises a number of challenging issues for teachers in their classroom interactions and for schools as a whole.

In conclusion, this is a well written report which is easy to read. This style, however, does not detract from the important and challenging issues it raises. Whether your school has a significant number of Muslims pupils or not, it makes a powerful case for tackling Islamophobia and gives insight into the impact of this on young British Muslims today. If you have ever been 'told' by a pupil that 'all Muslims are terrorists', then reading this report will give you the impetus to deal with such vocalisations of Islamophobia and make you more questioning of the images, language and resources you use within the classroom.

Our Shared Future: Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC)

[Our Shared Future: Commission on Integration and Cohesion \(COIC\)](#) (2007)

Gateways: [1.8](#), [2.11](#)

This is a downloadable 168-page report from the commission on Integration and Cohesion. It is divided into nine chapters with five appendix documents. The Commission began as a response to 7/7, but

tried to “be reflective about both the current successes as well as the challenges, and champion the good work already going on in many areas of the country”.

Usefulness and relevance

This resource has a specific purpose as a report to central government, and time is spent on definitions and how the report was carried out.

‘Our Shared Future’ begins with a useful vision statement of how things could look in 2020. The foreword written by Darra Singh the chair of the Commission includes some thoughtful quotes or sound bites which reflect on what it means to think locally and act globally (see additional detail).

The report identifies four key principles to “underpin a new understanding of integration and cohesion”: shared future, a new model of rights and responsibilities, new emphasis on mutual respect and civility, visible social justice.”

Pages 8-12 provide a helpful summary of what each chapter includes that will help readers identify which extracts are useful to them.

Mentors may find the report helpful for clarifying definitions of significant terms and practical examples from around the country relating to these definitions (shown in boxes through the report, especially from chapter 4 onwards).

Pages 34 and 35 provide an analysis of new definitions coming from the impact of “the global now being local”, including the impact of ‘multiple identity’, ‘superdiversity’ and transnationalism’.

Additional detail

From the foreword - quotes of possible interest:

“A past built on difference, a future which is shared.”

“However, what we all have in common is a desire to build a strong society where civility and courtesy are the norm, where people are at ease with change, and are committed to being good neighbours and active citizens. A society where opportunities for advancement are there for the taking and prosperity is more evenly distributed”.

“place matters and that all localities have unique qualities. it is through millions of small, everyday actions that we can all either improve or harm our local communities.”

“Integration and cohesion is no longer a special programme or project. It is also not about race, faith or other forms of group status or identity. It is simply about how we all get on and secure benefits that are mutually desirable for our communities and ourselves. It is both broad and deep, and influences all levels of activity in every part of England.”

Chapter 1 looks at broad changes that have taken place in British society since World War II and Chapter Two considers ‘How cohesive and integrated are we and how can this be judged?’ Key factors given are: Deprivation/ Discrimination/Crime and antisocial behaviour/ Level of diversity/Immigration, and two new areas of concern: Perceptions of fairness/The influence of the global on the local.

Page 38 gives a clear definition of integration and cohesion and then page 42 defines how this looks in a community.

“cohesion is principally the process that must happen in all communities to ensure different groups of people get on well together; while integration is principally the process that ensures new residents and existing residents adapt to one another.” (p. 38)

Chapters 4-7 are summarised in the report as considering:

- *the sense of ‘shared futures’ – an emphasis on articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them, and prioritising a shared future over divided legacies.*

- *an emphasis on a new model of responsibilities and rights – one that makes clear both a sense of citizenship at national and local level, and the obligations that go along with membership of a community, both for individuals or groups.*
- *a new emphasis on civility and mutual respect, that recognises that alongside the need to strengthen the social bonds within groups, the pace of change across the country reconfigures local communities rapidly – and that means a mutual hospitality within and between groups.*
- *a commitment to equality that sits alongside the need to make social justice visible, to prioritise transparency and fairness, and build trust in the institutions that arbitrate between groups.*

Chapter 8 considers practical actions and Chapter 9 on monitoring progress includes 57 recommendations from the commission to the government with links given in the report to where the recommendation is justified. This could be useful in giving links into areas of the report that may be of particular interest.

Annex B gives examples from different groups of where things have worked well or not worked in terms of cohesion and integration.

Endnotes gives a bibliography which could give some areas for further exploration.

Religious education in English schools: non-statutory guidance

[Religious education in English schools: non-statutory guidance](#) (2010) QCDA.

Gateway: [3.4](#)

Contents

The contents of this document, produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, include the following:

- *The context - a brief resumé of why an update on circular 1/94 was needed*
- *The importance of RE - largely the same as the introduction to KS3 programme of study*
- *The legal framework - this is a useful reference for Local Authorities, SACREs, governing bodies and head teachers.*

Heads and governors, those who manage, plan, teach and support RE, also have their own section giving examples of good practice.

There is a section on support for RE which might be found in the local community, as well as a list of references, RE professional bodies and publications.

Usefulness

This is an essential reference document which should be on the files/shelves of all head teachers. It is easy to find required sections and the case studies provide practical suggestions and ideas for how things can be done well. At the end of most sections there are checklists of bullet point questions summarising what the priorities should be for SACREs, Agreed Syllabus conferences, etc.

Unfortunately, it does not mention anything about how much curriculum time should be allocated to RE. Though it is non-statutory, this would have been a useful support for agreed syllabus conferences.

Relevance

Although this document does not deal specifically with contentious issues, it gives guidance on the foundations needed for all good RE.

Teaching about controversial issues (TIDEC)

[Teaching about controversial issues](#) (TIDEC)

Gateway: [2.6/2.9](#)

This article, produced by Tide Global Learning, looks to be a useful starting place for reflecting upon current practice and to highlight potential classroom strategies – a more useful approach to CPD maybe than presenting a series of prescriptive ideas. One of the interesting points coming out of the RESilience pilot project was the lack of confidence colleagues felt about handling discussion surrounding controversial issues. With this in mind, one of the action points on our action plan is to provide some CPD opportunities for colleagues to develop their confidence. I therefore thought it apposite to explore some of the resources signposted by RESilience.

In and of itself, it does not provide solutions. However, it does provide key focus questions and guidance from the QCA – as was – on the teaching of controversial issues through citizenship. The latter highlights examples of good practice during classroom discussion of such issues.

The strength of the article as a discussion/reflection document lies in the treatment of four positions teachers may wish to adopt in these situations. Here the article details a (potentially non-exhaustive) list of strengths and weaknesses which, in the context of RESilience mentoring, would allow for a discussion of approaches in a particular school context with action points based on that reflection – possibly, as I will be doing, supported with modelling by experienced teachers.