

# Effective SRE Good Practice

April 2009

*The impact of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) on the attitudes, knowledge and behaviour of young people is an important consideration for schools and is linked to the DCSF PSHE Education framework, the statutory duty on schools to promote the well-being of their pupils and the National Healthy Schools Programme.*

In 2004-2007 Rochdale Teenage Pregnancy Strategy conducted research with Year 10 pupils to explore alcohol and sexual health and the links between them. Further analysis of the data explored the way in which young people perceive SRE in schools, highlighting patterns in knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. This report

highlighted a number of schools where SRE had improved.

The Rochdale Healthy Schools Team decided to build on this research and uncover why the SRE in these schools had improved. In partnership with the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, schools and key personnel, further in depth



ROCHDALE  
TEENAGE  
PREGNANCY  
STRATEGY



Healthy Schools  
ROCHDALE

interviews were conducted with three schools/colleges across the borough.

This paper includes these individual case studies and draws on the findings from this research to identify models of good practice to be shared with other schools across the borough.



## Case Study – Siddal Moor Sports College

# The impact of Senior Management Support on Sex and Relationships Education

*Siddal Moor is an 11-16 comprehensive school with specialist sports college status. The school is of average size, and almost all pupils are White British with a small number of pupils from Pakistani backgrounds.*

Pupils at Siddal Moor tend to be less advantaged than the national average, reflecting Rochdale's levels of deprivation. The school has an average number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and has a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is, however, a lower than average number of pupils with statements of Special Educational Need.

The school holds a number of awards including Investors in People, Sportsmark Gold and has Healthy Schools Status. The attainment of GCSEs is in line with the national average.

The programme of Sex and Relationships Education at Siddal Moor is provided in the main by a course, developed by teachers at the school, called Beliefs, Values and Citizenship (BVC). In year 10 pupils are divided into single sex groups of 10 and the timetable is collapsed to allow one supplementary 3 hour session on sex and relationships with a trained Learning Mentor and the School Health Practitioner to take place. This happens on a rolling programme throughout the year, with each pupil receiving one session.

In an inspection in 2007, the school's programme of Personal, Social and Health education, including SRE, was praised.

**"Provision for pupils' Personal, Social and Health Education...is good and fully reflects the ethos and values of the school...sex education [is] taught in a sensitive and informative manner. Schemes of work and other supporting documentation are relevant and helpful. Teachers and other involved staff deal very well with sensitive issues. Because of this provision, pupils are well informed and knowledgeable...able to empathise with people in different situations and most respond confidently and maturely in lessons and in other situations."**

(OFSTED, 2007)



Through interviews with senior staff, teachers and governors conducted in March 2008, the following aspects of the SRE programme were identified as contributing to the success of Siddal Moor Sports College in delivering their programme of SRE.

Siddal Moor Sports College has in their deputy head teacher a strong senior champion with the authority to implement change who is knowledgeable about the SRE programme and able to present ideas in a straightforward way to other senior staff and governors. She has a good awareness of what works for the school in terms of their SRE programme, and acknowledges that there is no perfect model – therefore accepting that change is positive and necessary, and encouraging staff to continually develop the programme and delivery.

Throughout the school there is a clear commitment to quality delivery and monitoring of effectiveness – and staff readily acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of the delivery which leads them to adopt a continually reflective and action research based ethos to SRE.

Governors have ongoing communication with staff and senior management, understand the importance of the issues and support change. They are knowledgeable about the programme, have the ability

## ...pupils are well informed and knowledgeable.

to explain the programme to others, defend the ethos of SRE where necessary and are involved in the evaluation of the programme. Governors state that they trust the judgement of senior staff and make themselves accessible and approachable to them.

Face-to-Face staff are well supported, respected and valued by managers. They are well trained and have a pastoral focus. Staff members are clear about the levels of confidentiality they can offer to young people and have a good knowledge of other local services. They are committed to the delivery of SRE and are passionate about partnership working and the programme.

Pupils are involved in the delivery and evaluation of the programme. The focus of the single sex, small groups work is determined by the young people in the group and differentiated according to their needs. Pupils are

briefed verbally and in writing about the confidentiality policy of the school and are aware that most issues would not cause a child protection concern. Therefore they are confident to create open discussions with staff.

In conclusion, Siddal Moor is a model of senior management support for SRE, and this can be summed up using the acronym the school has devised for its SRE course title -

**B**elieve in the programme

**V**alue and Support the programme and your staff

**C**ulture – make sure SRE is embedded in the ethos of the school

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## Case Study – Hollingworth Business and Enterprise College

# Increasing Sexual Health Knowledge through Sex and Relationships Education

*The practices and policies which have led to pupils at Hollingworth Business and Enterprise College (BEC) having higher than average sexual health knowledge in a recent survey of young people's attitudes to sexual health and alcohol, carried out in 2007 by the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, led to Hollingworth being chosen as a case study example.*

Hollingworth BEC is an 11-16 comprehensive school with specialist business and enterprise college status. The school is larger than average, and almost all pupils are White British. The catchment area of Hollingworth BEC is varied, with some wards in the catchment area having high levels of social and economic deprivation. The school has an average number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and has a lower than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The

school has Healthy Schools Status and the attainment of GCSEs was above the national average in 2007.

The programme of Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) at Hollingworth BEC is guided by a scheme of work, developed by teachers at the school in conjunction with advice from the Healthy Schools Programme Manager and other external agencies. In Key Stage 3, SRE is taught as part of Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) and encompasses subjects such as bullying, relationships, self-

esteem and the provision of information about relevant community services. In Key Stage 4, a six-week block of lessons around SRE is delivered to all pupils by trained form tutors. The programme was developed using the findings of the year 10 survey completed in 2004 and again in 2007 by the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.

Interviews with senior members of staff involved in developing the SRE scheme of work and associated programme were conducted in May 2008. The following aspects of the SRE

## Case Study – Middleton Technology School

# Developing Positive Pupil Attitudes to SRE

*Middleton Technology School is an 11-16 comprehensive school with specialist designation for technology, vocational education and Raising Achievement Transforming Learning (RATL) through which this school works to support underperforming schools. The school also has a Leading Aspect Award for its work with gifted and talented students. The school is of average size, and almost all pupils are White British.*

Middleton Technology College serves an urban area of social and economic deprivation and has a higher than average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is delivered within the Life Education Curriculum and the taught curriculum is placed on the firmly embedded values and vision of the school.

In an inspection in 2006, the school's programme of Personal, Social and Health Education, including SRE, was praised.

**“Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding, though the school was modest in its evaluation. The new Life Education Programme is developing positive citizenship and informed views on moral, social and personal health issues. An imminent Healthy Schools Award shows how well students respond to the need to adopt healthy lifestyles... An imaginative life education course ingeniously blended with humanities amply covers Citizenship, as well as Personal, Social and Health Education.”**

(OFSTED, 2006)

## Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding

Through interviews with senior staff, teachers and governors conducted in March 2008, the following aspects of the SRE programme were identified as contributing to the success of Middleton Technology School in delivering their programme of SRE and

specifically in relation to the high number of pupils displaying positive attitudes to SRE (as shown in the Teenage Pregnancy Year 10 Survey).

Pupils have consistency of message throughout SRE with same curriculum and same ground-rules being set in place regardless of which member of staff is delivering it. The structure of the curriculum ensures non-specialist staff have support from more skilled staff and that the same bank of resources is available to all.

The use of local intelligence through the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Year 10 survey to inform the curriculum ensures that teaching is relevant to pupils and informed by them. The findings of the survey are acted upon to close gaps and make provision equitable, e.g. making the curriculum more relevant and engaging for boys and making sure the link between alcohol and sexual health is taught more explicitly. Assessment of student knowledge is pivotal in ensuring learning in the subject.

Pupils feel safe and comfortable to approach staff with issues about sex and relationships on an informal basis and their relationships with staff were

highlighted in the recent Ofsted report: “The provision for the care, guidance and support of the students is outstanding. Students are treated as individuals and this allows them to thrive”.

SRE has a high status in school and the profile of PSHE has been raised by creating a specific curriculum area with dedicated timetable space.

Life Education (and SRE within this) is a discrete curriculum area and a specific department in school with core staff who are dedicated, highly trained, hold the CPD for teaching PSHE and support other staff who deliver the content. There is a highly motivated, energetic and skilled leader of the curriculum area and this is important in driving the development of SRE.

The involvement of partners and parents in the development of the curriculum is pivotal. Governors have been fully involved and discussed content of the curriculum and give support and backing if there is a problem. They see the Teenage Pregnancy Survey and encourage the school to use the findings to develop the curriculum. School health also has strong links with the governing body. Parents have been surveyed and involved in the process of development and links with specialist services, including school health, are strong and enhance the taught SRE.

Continuous development of the programme is key and the school is constantly moving forward to improve the quality of the curriculum and to ensure relevance to pupils and local issues. The school is looking towards developing a completely specialised team to deliver the curriculum with the long term aim of achieving a shift in behaviour and attitudes within the school.



programme were identified as contributing to the success of Hollingworth BEC in delivering their programme of SRE.

the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy Research Programme and sexual health promotion is considered to have been vital to the success of

and ideas. Commitment and support from Governors who maintain the role of “critical friend” and challenge where appropriate is integral to the

## Staff aspirations for pupils in the school are high with ambitions to develop an outstanding programme of SRE

Hollingworth BEC attribute the success of their SRE programme in increasing the sexual health knowledge of their year-10 pupils to a comprehensive scheme of work, complete with lesson plans and resources which is delivered consistently across Key Stage 4 by well trained staff with a specific interest in SRE. Consistency in teaching was achieved by inviting interested staff to training provided by the Healthy Schools Programme Manager, and by gaining a commitment to delivery of the programme from form tutors.

Continued input from relevant external bodies, particularly Healthy Schools,

Hollingworth BEC provision in this subject. Involvement with external organisations has also afforded staff at Hollingworth BEC the opportunity to take part in continuous revision of the programme in line with best practice guidance through membership of PSHE and Citizenship Network Meetings, which have enabled the sharing of resources and facilitated support from colleagues in other areas.

Support from the head teacher for the programme was considered to be vital to its success – particularly when planning complementary, collapsed timetable events or seeking the authorisation to try out new approaches

development of good SRE in Hollingworth BEC.

Staff aspirations for pupils in the school are high and ambitions to develop an “outstanding” programme of SRE alongside general levels of education contribute to an holistic educational ethos in the school. In addition, the school continually strives to raise aspiration and achievement of pupils and this is known to be a protective factor in helping young people to avoid taking health risks.

*The three schools were selected with each one identified as having a particular strength that could be analysed in further depth. These were:-*

- The impact of Senior Management support on SRE
  - Siddal Moor Sports College
- Increased sexual health knowledge of pupils
  - Hollingworth Business and Enterprise College
- Pupils positive attitudes to SRE
  - Middleton Technology School

However it became apparent that with all of these schools there were a number of aspects that were common, these can be identified as:-

A commitment to SRE

- SRE has high status in school
- Support from the head teacher
- Commitment and support from governors

- A strong senior champion with the authority to implement change
- Governors have ongoing communication with staff and senior management

A clear management structure for SRE

- Partners and parents involved in development
- Face to face staff are well supported, respected and valued by managers
- Ambitions of staff to develop an 'outstanding' programme of SRE
- Continuous development of the programme
- Continuous revision of the programme in line with best practice guidance
- A comprehensive scheme of work, complete with lesson plans and resources

Effective, evidence based practice

- Discrete curriculum area for SRE
- Consistency of message

- Consistent delivery across Key Stages
- Input from relevant external bodies
- Pupils are involved in the delivery and evaluation of the programme
- The programme is relevant to pupils and informed by them
- Pupils feel safe and comfortable to approach staff
- School continually strives to raise aspirations and achievements of pupils

All of the schools identified have National Healthy Schools Status and as such encompass the whole school approach of the National Healthy Schools Programme. This is reflected in their commitment to effective SRE provision.

The NHSP whole school approach:-

- Leadership, management and managing change
- Policy development
- Curriculum planning and work with outside agencies
- Teaching and learning
- School culture and environment
- Giving children and young people a voice
- Provision of pupil support services
- Staff professional development needs, health and welfare
- Partnerships with parents/carers and local communities
- Assessing recording and reporting children and young peoples' achievement

In conclusion the three schools identified have had a long term commitment to the provision of SRE and have continuously worked with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to develop their provision. The key to their success is also mirrored in their willingness to embrace change, take on board new ideas and approaches and have a wider view of the needs of their pupils in relation to the local and national picture. This work continues to be seen as 'work in progress!'

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