CRUSH

Transforming Relationships and Sexuality Education

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Section 1

EQUITY

PROTECTIVE

INCLUSIVE

About Crush

CRUSH is a professional learning resource for making RSE matter in primary, secondary and special schools in Wales. Supported by the new statutory RSE guidance, the resource is grounded in listening to and learning from teachers, learners and researchers.

RIGHTS

CO-PRODUCED

EMPOWERING

HOLISTIC

CREATIVE

For primaries, secondaries and special schools

CRUSH is a resource for teachers and other educators working in primary, secondary and special schools in Wales. It has also been used and adapted by educators working in conducive contexts outside of Wales.

An evolving resource

RSE practice is constantly changing as teachers adapt and develop new ideas and respond to young people's evolving questions, needs and concerns. CRUSH is always evolving to capture this shifting landscape, adding new illustrated school case studies and films each year to share the stories of how teachers are transforming what RSE can be and become with and for children and young people.

#RSEWales

A grounded resource

The making of this resource is grounded in and draws upon our experience of supporting over 310 primary, secondary and special school teachers to prepare for Wales' new statutory RSE in a series of professional learning workshops and webinars since 2019.

Over 1300 teachers and teaching assistants have taken part in conducting creative audits to share their views on the new RSE curriculum.

Over 4,500 children and young people have taken part in a creative audit to share their views on what they want to learn and how in RSE.

#reassemblingtherules

This resource illustrates how the critical, creative and participatory methods developed in the ***AGENDA toolkit*** are informing the design and implementation of this bespoke professional learning programme.

Throughout the resource we use case studies from research and school-based practice. All of the case studies are from Wales and we have taken care to ensure there is a mix of schools represented in the resource. There are urban and rural schools from different regions in Wales and schools in affluent areas and those in areas of high economic deprivation. There are Welsh medium and English medium schools, faith schools, schools working with diverse faith communities and schools where few children come from faith backgrounds. Many of these contextual details have been removed along with all the names of the teachers, schools, children and young people. This is to protect the identities of the children and young people involved. If you see a name in any of the case studies or examples - this is a pseudonym.

CRUSH is a responsive and responsible resource. It will always be under review and it will expand, contract and adapt as it evolves to critically engage with new ideas, research, guidance, legislation and its usefulness in practice. Rights, equity, social justice and empowerment will inform this process.

Why Crush?

Crush as FEELING

attuning to the diversity, unpredictability and intensity of emotions that ebb and flow throughout all RSE learning and experience.

Crush as FORCE

developing an affirmative praxis for addressing injustice, inequity and violence, and working with the forces that make change and empowerment possible.

Crush as FOLD

recognising the messiness of experience and the potential of RSE, as a trans-disciplinary field, to explore how categories and concepts (e.g. identity, consent, body image) entangle and fold into one another.

Section 2

Relationships and Sexuality Education in Wales: Then and Now

This section provides a brief overview of how RSE has changed in Wales and why.

It includes the core underpinning principles of Wales' new RSE and an overview of the three curriculum content strands (also known as the RSE Code).

RSE is everywhere!

Children start learning about relationships and sexuality education (RSE) long before they start school. Throughout their lives children and young people will encounter complex and contradictory messages about sex, gender, relationships and sexuality from, for example, advertising, books, music, social media and television and from family members, peers and communities. These messages will shape their day to day lives, who they imagine themselves to be and what they want and expect from their futures.

"High quality RSE provision will support learners to critically engage with what they are learning and experiencing. This supports them to understand their values and beliefs and to advocate for respect and understanding of others"

(Welsh Government RSE Guidance 2022)

"Children and young people are navigating a range of complex and contradictory messages about relationships and sexuality that will shape their sense of self and their relationships with others"

(Welsh Government RSE Guidance 2022)

Schools can listen, learn and respond

Children arrive at school with their own questions, curiosities, ideas and imaginations about relationships, bodies and identities. The role of school-based Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) is to create safe and enabling learning environments within which children can explore what they already know and are interested in, access accurate information, listen to the views and ideas of others and expand their understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.

Why change was needed

In Wales a new curriculum and statutory guidance has been developed for schools and other educational settings which will be in use throughout Wales from 2022.

As part of these changes Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) has also been reviewed by an expert panel leading to new legislation and new guidance that will also be in place from 2022.

Drawing on a wide range of national and international research, an expert panel found that previous law and guidance on Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in Wales was outdated and its non-statutory status meant it was often poorly resourced and given low priority in schools, leading to uneven and unequal provision.

In addition, the expert panel (Renold and McGeeney 2017a, 2017b) found that the old SRE was...

Too biological: School based SRE has been criticised for being 'too biological', with a focus on human development, puberty and sexual health at the expense of a focus on children's rights, gender and sexual equity, and on children's emotions and sexual relationships and experiences.

Too shaming: School based SRE has also been criticised for being too negative and risk focused, without giving enough attention to the positive and pleasurable aspects of relationships and sexuality. Such approaches, which often use shock and shame to educate young people, have been shown not to be effective. What's needed are affirmative approaches that offer support, hope, encouragement and possibility.

Too late: Research shows that there is a big gap between what children and young people want to learn and the SRE they experience in school contexts. Frequently children report learning about SRE issues too late in their lives. Part of the reason for this gap between learning and experience is that there are not enough opportunities for children and young people to influence what they learn and make it relevant for their lives.

Too out of date: Current law and guidance on SRE is outdated. It fails to reflect the ways in which children and young people are navigating an increasingly complex world of expanding and contracting understandings and experiences of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships.

Too straight: School-based SRE often only refers to heterosexual relationships and fails to include Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ+) identities, expressions, experiences, relationships and rights. This fails to meet children and young people's diverse experiences, needs, questions and concerns.

Too ableist? SRE is often inadequate for children and young people with disabilities and additional learning needs. Too often schools fail to promote the relationship and sexual rights of young people with disablities or ensure access to accessible and developmentally appropriate resources.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES WANT SCHOOLS TO STOP AND START in RSE?

STOP...

avoiding difficult topics

always splitting us 'boy/girl'

ignoring that other sexualities exist

blaming women for sexual assault, ie. 'cover up', 'don't ask for it', 'just say no'

racism and homophobia make a school a more happier and safer place to be

stigmatising 'women's issues' and uncomfortable topics

alienating people who experience love/ attraction differently to the 'normal

being uncomfortable

(age 13-16)

STOP...

body shaming

people being bullied and having bad thoughts

feeling awkward - it's fine to talk about it

discriminating people that are LGBTQ

seeing racism and people being sexist

keeping secrets from us kids about our topic

being the person THEY want you to be

(age 11)

STOP...

stereotyping people

avoiding questions

giving confusing messages

treating us like kids

bullying because of the way they look

bullying people who are different

(Special School)

For more examples from early years settings, primary, secondary special schools on young people's views on what and how they want to learn about RSE, go to the **StARTing Out** case studies section in this resource.

WHAT DO YOUNG PEOPLE IN WALES WANT SCHOOLS TO STOP AND START in RSE?

START...

teaching about different sexualities

discussion time and time to talk about the topic

making sure we are in a relaxed, judgement free zone

start addressing topical issues instead of dancing around them

teaching about realistic situations, consent and safe sex, toxic masculinity, misogyny, gender identity, periods, inclusive lessons LGBTQ+, harassment and assault, sexualisation of girls.

being more inclusive in general (sexuality, gender etc)

teaching about pleasure and oral sex, specifically female masturbation

being sex positive! It's not a bad, secretive and forbidden thing – treat it positively please

queer sex ed – not just existence but how sex works for different relationships and people

(age 13-16)

START...

learning more about sex so people are less awkward talking about it

asking people what they want to learn about

loving people for who they are

seeing equality throughout school

being open about your relationships and sexuality

a club for LGBTQ+ so they feel better

being respectful to everyone no matter their looks or sexualities

being easier to talk to

(age 11)

START...

targeting the lessons towards our age group

saying it as it is

treating us like adults

making the lessons more engaging

treating people the same

giving us clear information

listening to learners in lessons

dding more information on each subject we learn

(Special School)

For more examples from early years settings, primary, secondary special schools on young people's views on what and how they want to learn about RSE, go to the **StARTing Out** case studies section in this resource.

Summary of the key changes to RSE in Wales

The definition of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) has changed and expanded to Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE).

This new definition signals a much more holistic and integrated curriculum that can be explored across schools to meet the diverse needs of children and young people.

RSE will now be statutory for all children ages 3-16.

In line with best practice schools are now able to start to build a spiral RSE curriculum from a young age. This ensures that from foundation phase onwards, teachers can co-create a relevant and developmentally appropriate curriculum that will support learners throughout their school lives.

RSE will be delivered as part of a whole school approach,

in line with best practice and the new Curriculum for Wales.

RSE will be integrated into the new 6 AoLE as a cross-curricular subject.

Learners will be able to explore themes holistically and learning will not be limited to stand alone lessons or assemblies.

Children's rights to RSE are now protected by ending parental right to withdraw.

Parents will no longer be able to withdraw their children from RSE which means that all children will now have the right to participate in developmentally appropriate RSE.

There will be an emphasis on Rights, Equity, LGBTQ+ Inclusivity and Empowerment

in both the content and the pedagogy of the RSE provision.

Research Matters

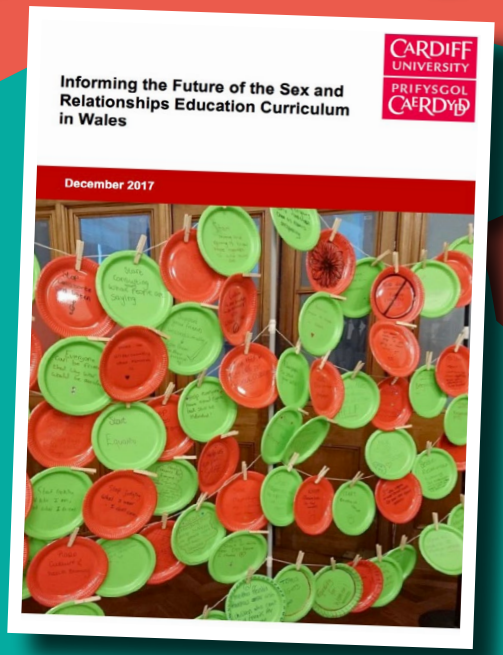
A wide body of national and international research has guided the development of RSE in Wales. There's a lot we can learn from this research (summarised in the reports by Renold and McGeeney 2017) about WHAT children and young people want and need to learn in RSE and HOW best to create safe and enabling learning environments within which to explore this content.

Re-defining RSE

"RSE provision helps to ensure learners develop a positive understanding of relationships and sexuality and recognise misconceptions.

RSE aims to empower learners in line with their needs, experiences and wider development. Through discussion and by responding to learners' questions and needs, it can provide safe and empowering environments that enable learners to reflect on and express their views and feelings on a range of issues."

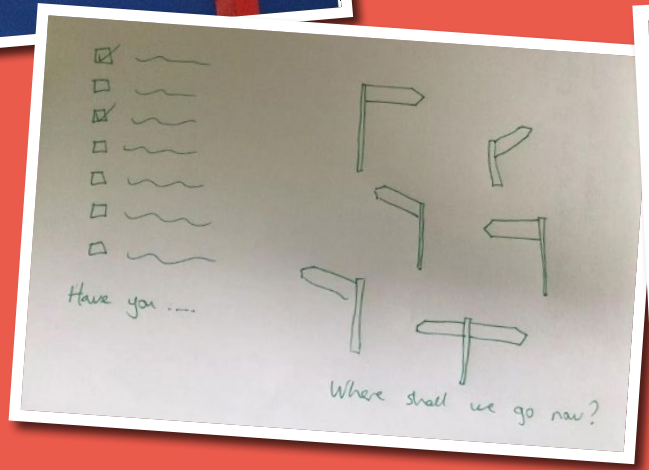
(Welsh Government 2022)

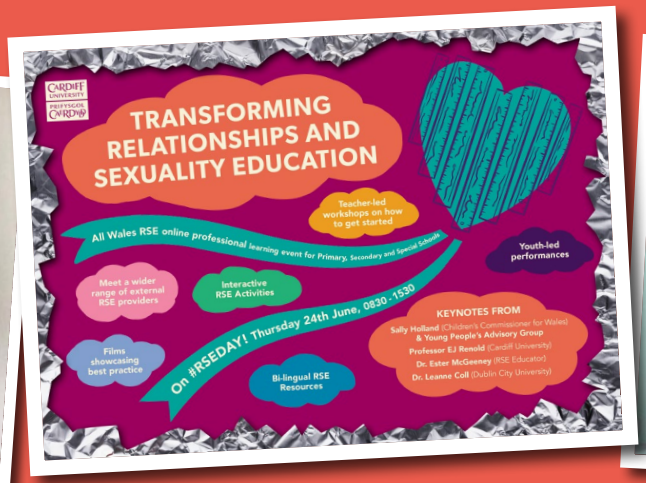


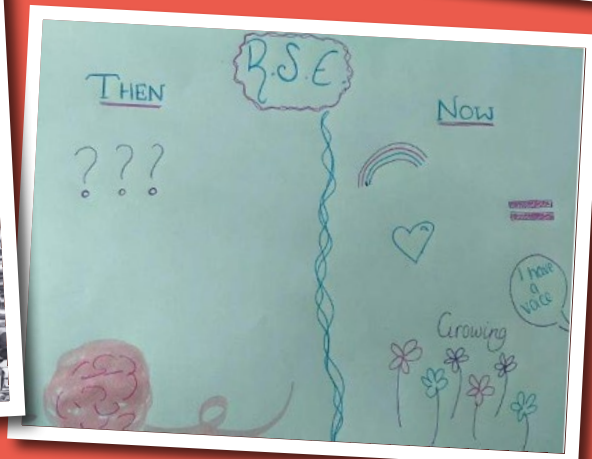
Find out more about the definitions of sex, gender, sexuality and relationships at ***www.agendaonline.co.uk*** and the evidence-base that has informed this new definition of RSE at ***bit.ly/futureofSRE***

RSE then and now

On RSE day 2021, Professor EJ Renold, Dr. Ester McGeeney and Dr. Leanne Coll organised an online conference to introduce teachers to the new forthcoming RSE in Wales. At the end of the morning session participants were asked to create an image that represents what RSE in Wales was and what RSE in Wales is now becoming. These are some of their images.







What are the key curriculum themes?

WHAT

The content of the new RSE is imagined in two ways.

Firstly as a set of six themes that have been developed by teachers based on the UNESCO International Sexuality education guidance.

- **Sex, Gender and Sexuality**
- **Bodies and Body Image**
- **Rights and Equity**
- **Sexual Health and Well-being**
- **Relationships**
- **Violence, Safety and Support**

"The Welsh government committed to covering the following themes in RSE: relationships; rights and equity; sex, gender and sexuality; bodies and body image; sexual health and well-being; and violence, safety and support."

(Welsh Government 2022)

What is the RSE code?

The RSE Code "contains mandatory requirements, the legal basis for which is set out in the legislation summary of this Curriculum for Wales framework guidance. It sets out the themes and matters that must be encompassed in RSE. A curriculum and teaching and learning must encompass the mandatory element of RSE outlined within the following RSE Code"

(Welsh Government 2022)

RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITY

Secondly the content of the new RSE is imagined as three thematic strands. These thematic strands make up the RSE code. The six themes cut across the three thematic strands.

SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

"To assist schools and settings in their planning of RSE, these themes are interwoven into the learning strands" (Welsh Government 2022)

EMPOWERMENT, SAFETY AND RESPECT

RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITY

The range of relationships that human beings have throughout their lives

How identity can be shaped by our relationships and sexuality

The importance of human rights in securing healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships in an inclusive society (Welsh Government 2022)

SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The health issues related to relationships and sexuality

Learning about how living things grow, reproduce and have a life cycle

An understanding of how sexuality and sexual health affects our well-being

Developing an understanding of the human body, including people's feelings about their bodies and how these can be represented (Welsh Government 2022)

EMPOWERMENT, SAFETY AND RESPECT

Learners' rights to safety and protection and freedom from harm and discrimination

How and where to seek information, help and support

How to support and advocate for the rights, fair treatment and respect of all (Welsh Government 2022)

For further detail on each thematic strand, across three phases (from age 3, from age 7, from age 11) go to the **Making the RSE Code matter** section.

A spiral curriculum

"Each strand of learning below are in three broad developmental phases. As they are set out, they represent the building blocks of progression in RSE. As learners progress, they will be building upon previous learning from either phase one; or phases one and two, consolidating and strengthening the same dispositions, knowledge and skills and applying them in new, relevant contexts. This is very different to simply acquiring learning about topics in isolation and then moving on to other content"

(Welsh Government 2022)

"The learning for RSE refers to both what is taught expressly and what is embedded throughout the curriculum and in the school environment through the whole school approach"

(Welsh Government, 2022)

HOW

Transforming RSE: 8 guiding principles

The new Relationships and Sexuality Education statutory guidance outlines a vision for *how* the spiral curriculum content must be provided.

POSITIVE, PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE

"Schools should look to create safe and supportive learning environments. These help create trust and allow learners a safe space to consider learning, ask questions and express their thoughts and feelings. Practitioners should seek to present learning around RSE issues positively and meaningfully"

RELEVANT, RESPONSIVE AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

"Schools should include learners' perspectives to ensure relevant and responsive RSE and provide increasing opportunities for learners to help direct their learning as they progress. Learners' views about what, how and where they learn should be taken into consideration so that the RSE curriculum can truly reflect the experiences that children and young people encounter in society"

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY BASED

"Schools and settings should discuss RSE in the context of children's rights as protected by the UNCRC. A rights based approach supported by equity should be embedded in the learning"

INFORMED AND SUPPORTED BY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

"Professional learning is a key requirement for the realisation of high quality RSE, and should occur at a school, cluster, regional and national level"

LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE

"RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality … this of course includes gender equity and LGBTQ+ inclusivity"

INFORMED BY A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

"This means effectively linking all aspects of school, including the curriculum, policy, staff, school environment and community to support learners in their relationships and sexuality education"

ITERATIVE AND PROVIDED ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

"RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions.

ENGAGING WITH LEARNERS, PARENTS, CARERS AND WIDER COMMUNITIES

"Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community, offering them the opportunity to engage with learning and teaching in RSE"

Section 3

Making Professional Learning Matter

an innovative approach to in-service Relationships and Sexuality Education

Preparing teachers for the new RSE

Core workshop activities

Teacher reflections

Preparing teachers for the new RSE

A bespoke programme preparing teachers for the new RSE in Wales

In 2018 Professor Renold and Dr. McGeeney were invited by Central South Consortium to design and deliver a series of Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) professional learning workshops, to support teachers to prepare for the new RSE statutory curriculum and guidance in Wales.

The three-day professional learning programme has now been running since 2018 and we have expanded into other areas and consortia across Wales.

The programme consists of an initial two day workshop in which teachers are introduced to the new RSE curriculum and learn about key issues and research case studies relating to RSE.

Teachers are also supported to design their own RSE creative audits in which they use creative methods to gather the views of children, young people, teachers, parents and governors about how RSE is being provided in their schools. One further workshop follows, at which teachers share the learning from their creative audits and are supported to use this learning to bring about changes to the RSE curriculum in their school.

From 2018 – 2022 the new RSE leads have collectively engaged with over **4500** children and young people and over **1400** members of staff amounting to a large scale RSE participatory inquiry project across Wales.

"Professional learning is a key requirement for the realisation of high quality RSE, and should occur at a school, cluster, regional and national level"

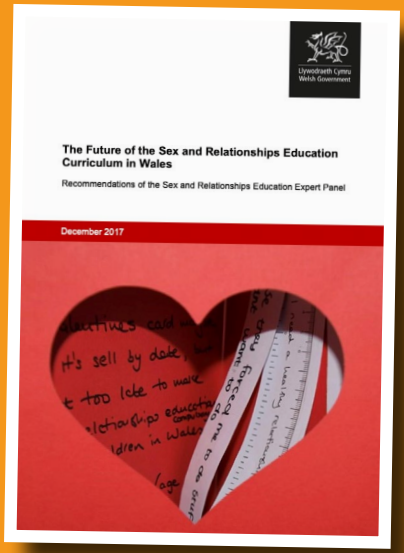
(Welsh Government 2022, RSE Guidance)

An innovative approach to in-service RSE: creative and critical pedagogy

The programme is research-driven, participatory and creative, modelling promising practice in RSE and providing the opportunity for teacher-participants to put their learning into practice through carrying out a participatory inquiry project at their school.

This innovative approach to professional learning in RSE is based on the findings and recommendations of the expert RSE panel that was convened in 2017 to make recommendations to the Welsh government informing the development of a new RSE curriculum (Renold and McGeeney 2017a, 2017b).

The programme is underpinned by the eight core principles for RSE that were recommended by the panel, and now feature in the statutory RSE curriculum.


Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

The Future of the Sex and Relationships Education Curriculum in Wales

Recommendations of the Sex and Relationships Education Expert Panel

December 2017

Why creative and critical pedagogy?

Creative pedagogy uses arts-based methods to enable a wide range of expression and discussion so that ideas can take-off and new connections can be made.

It often involves learning to unlearn what we think we know. This makes space for us to be curious about what really matters to ourselves and to others.

Creative pedagogy can also support the creation of safe and inclusive environments to feel, think, question and share sensate, sensitive or difficult issues. Working in the creative mode can encourage new responses to familiar or unfamiliar feelings, ideas, movements, concepts or situations.

However, it isn't a matter of anything goes. The pedagogy that we use is critical as well as creative. It keeps a check on power relations and social norms and works to understand and transform how these power relations, norms and inequalities play out (e.g. how gender, sexual or racialized stereotypes are reinforced, questioned or challenged).

For more on what it means to 'be creative' see *www.agendaonline.co.uk/be-creative*

Whilst there is a wealth of international research on RSE, very little is known about how RSE is delivered in Welsh schools, in particular in primary and special schools. There is a lack of research internationally about teacher training in relation to RSE (Renold and McGeeney 2017).

Summary of the RSE professional learning programme

1 **Re-imagining RSE:** Two day workshop for teachers to introduce the core principles underpinning the forthcoming statutory RSE in Wales through a series of creative and interactive activities, including: fielding fears and building confidence; over-turning assumptions with research crush cards; mapping current and future practices with the three thematic areas across the RSE Code; making voice matter with creative and critical pedagogy.

2 **Conducting a creative audit:** Teachers carry out a creative RSE audit mapping the views and needs of young people, staff, governors and parents.

3 **Darta Cwrdd: Teachers share and interact with** the darta collected from the creative audit; darta analysis; and next steps for further inquiry.

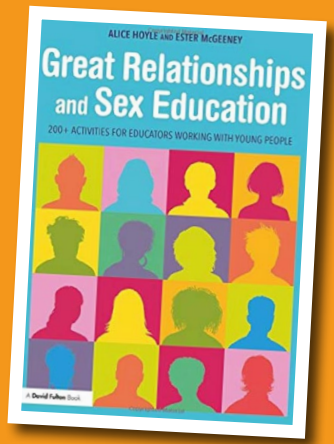
What is Darta?
Go to page 30 to find out

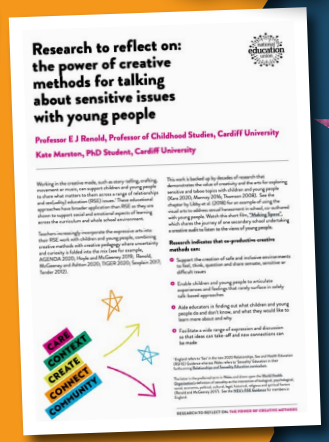
4 **Making RSE Matter:** Teachers design and implement how they are attuning to and acting upon the learning from their creative audits (e.g. additional creative audits; policy development; participatory inquiry projects taking forward one core principle or theme).

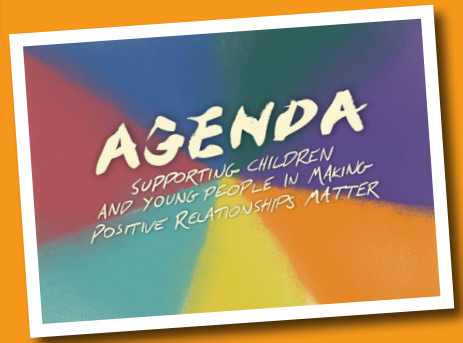
5 **Sharing and Supporting:** Some of our programmes have an additional day where teachers share the findings of their progress and critically reflect on their learning journey so far, including what further support they need and can offer each other.

Each year teachers from previous cohorts come along to support the new cohort and share their RSE journeys so far.

Each workshop was underpinned by a selection of key readings to engage with before the programme began to give participants time to engage with the key debates about RSE and prepare for the initial workshop. Key readings included:







For further resources see the section, ***'Becoming Resourceful'.***

Core workshop activities

What Jars us about RSE?

Fielding fears and building confidence

Crush Cards

Towards relevant and developmentally appropriate RSE

Mapping with UNESCO

Towards holistic and inclusive RSE

What Jars us about RSE?

Fielding fears and building confidence

RSE is a specialist area of the curriculum that addresses sensitive issues that can arouse feelings of anxiety, embarrassment and vulnerability among teachers, students and parents.

Without specialist training schools may either avoid covering sensitive or challenging topics altogether or provide RSE in a way that fails to adequately support and safeguard children and young people.

Addressing these issues head on, the Professional Learning Programme, invites participants to voice their own concerns about RSE using the 'What Jars you?' exercise.

Each teacher is given a jar and asked to write down on pieces of paper what 'jars' them about RSE in their schools. Teachers often fill the jars with their (anonymous) fears and concerns about RSE.

Meeting resistance

A key concern for teachers is how to engage the wider community of staff, learners and parents to support RSE provision. They often express concern over how to tackle staff resistance, increase confidence and find time to train and co-ordinate staff to ensure consistent high quality provision.

Meeting pupil needs

Another set of concerns include how to develop an appropriate and meaningful RSE curriculum that meets pupils needs, especially those with additional needs.

Meeting discomfort

A third common key theme in teachers responses is about how to manage the embarrassment and discomfort of staff and pupils when teaching and learning about RSE.

The What Jars You? Activity has proven to be popular with teacher-participants, not only as a way of enabling them to reflect and share their concerns about the new RSE curriculum but as a creative method for enabling children and young people in their schools to later share their views about RSE.

Jump to the end to read their ***reflections*** on some of these early anxieties.

Crush Cards

Towards relevant and developmentally appropriate RSE

Research Matters

There is a big gap between children and young people's lived experiences and the content of the RSE curriculum. Research shows that RSE often fails to address children and young people's questions and concerns and that many children struggle to find themselves and their experiences reflected in the RSE curriculum. To address this gap we created the CRUSH CARDS that can be used with teachers, and can be adapted for use with children and young people.

Participants took part in a card sort activity that was designed specifically for the workshop to bring children and young people's experiences of relationships, gender and sexualities to the forefront and to challenge and overturn teachers' assumptions about children's lives and experiences.

Outing our categories

The Crush Cards contain a bold image on one side such as a wedding dress, a pair of lips, a tampon or a gun. Participants work in groups and are asked to sort the cards into categories. Unlike in most card sort activities (a technique commonly used in RSE) participants are not given the categories but asked to create their own. This enables participants to explore whatever themes are important to them and to set the pace and tone of the discussion. Participants repeat this exercise three times, creating new categories each time.

Click here to explore the Crush Card resource

Over-turning our expectations

In the final part of the activity participants turn the cards over to reveal a case study on the back of each card. Each case study is drawn from research with children and young people and offers a snapshot into their lives. The images are related to the case studies, but sometimes in unexpected ways. For example, on the back of a card containing an image of a white wedding dress is the story of 13 year old Nazera and her views on intimacy before marriage, dating, her decision to wear the hijab and her admiration of the non-binary singer Sam Smith. On the back of an image of pair of red lips is the account of five year old Matilda's experience of kiss chase in the school playground and behind the image of the tampon is 17 year old Indiah's story of having sex with a partner whilst on her period.

Teachers often comment upon on the value of these case studies for bringing children's experiences into the classroom and offering a fresh perspective on familiar RSE topics such as internet safety and sexual health. Instead of trying to fix a 'problem' or offer a moral stance on an issue. These case studies open up opportunities to discuss situations that children and young people may experience in their relationships and everyday lives and expand what counts as RSE.

Crush Cards (continued)

Crushing age-appropriateness

We also invite participants to choose one of the crush-stories and use the Brook Traffic Light Tool to explore the story. This is a tool that helps professionals working with children and young people to understand what healthy sexual development looks like. The tool lists red, amber and green sexual behaviours for children of all ages to help professionals identify, understand and respond to children and young people's sexual behaviours.

At the professional learning programme we asked teachers to identify any red, amber or green behaviours in the stories. This generated discussion on how we come to know what is age or developmentally appropriate as we explored the following questions:

How do notions of childhood innocence shape notions of age or developmental appropriateness?

How might reflecting on social, cultural and historical dimensions of experience help?

Does the CRUSH-story you selected complicate the way the Traffic Light Tool-kit has coded the behaviour in the story as green, amber or red?

Developmentally appropriate pedagogy is being responsive and flexible to the issues that may arise when curriculum content creates an interactive platform that welcomes children's own curiosity and knowledge (Renold and McGeeney 2017, p.62).

Schools should include learners' perspectives to ensure relevant and responsive RSE and provide increasing opportunities for learners to help direct their learning as they progress. Learners' views about what, how and where they learn should be taken into consideration so that the RSE curriculum can truly reflect the experiences that children and young people encounter in society.

(Welsh Government 2022, RSE Guidance)

Teacher comments

Developmentally appropriate RSE...

IS... inclusive and accessible

IS NOT... one size fits all

IS... fluid

IS NOT... a linear approach

IS... building a relationship with the children in your care

IS NOT... easy to get right

IS... thinking about what is important to and for our children

IS NOT... age specific

Mapping RSE Across the Curriculum

The content of the new RSE is imagined in two ways. Firstly as a set of six themes that have been developed by teachers based on the UNESCO International Sexuality education guidance and secondly as three thematic strands. During the early workshops participants were introduced to the UNESCO guidance and the six key themes for RSE set out in the revised draft 2019 RSE guidance. Since the publication of the RSE Code in 2022, participants are now introduced to the core content across three thematic strands, and across the three phases (from age 3, from age 7 and from age 11).

RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITY

SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

EMPOWERMENT, SAFETY AND RESPECT

MIND THE GAP: Mapping RSE across the curriculum

Which **thematic areas** do you currently explore across the six areas of learning and experience (AOLE)? Use this quick mapping chart to help you audit what you already offer, and how, and note down ideas (possibilities and challenges) for future provision.

	Expressive Arts	Health and Well-being	Maths and Numeracy	Humanities	Language, Literacy and Communication	Science and technology	Whole school environment
Relationships and Identity							
Sexual Health and Well-being							
Empowerment, Safety and Support							

Go to the section **"Making the RSE CODE Matter"** for full details of the content for each theme, for each phase.

Go to the **Mind the Gap** section for a helpful mapping chart!

UNESCO provides a set of learning objectives for each age category (5-8, 9-12, 12-15, 15-18+)

RSE in Wales is a cross-cutting theme.

In the workshops teachers are invited to map current practice at their school across the thematic areas and across the curriculum.

A strength of this activity is that it enables teachers to expand their understanding of RSE and to think holistically about RSE as an inter-disciplinary subject. It also helps teachers to identify strengths and gaps in current practice.

In discussion, teachers reflected that they are covering the theme of Relationships well and some teachers were able to map this theme across the curriculum.

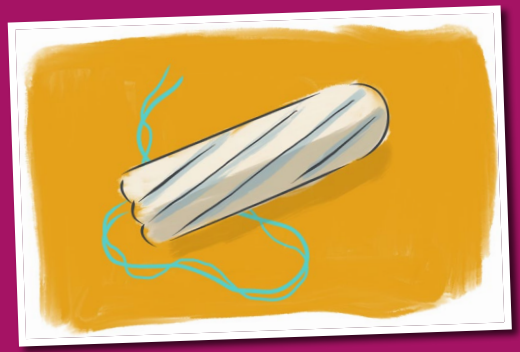
One teacher noted that relationship diversity is visible across the AoLEs. For example, in French learners look at the family tree, in geography learners look at equal marriage as an indicator of development, in Spanish learners look at the history of Lorca and study his texts and in media studies they analyse magazine covers that include gay couples.

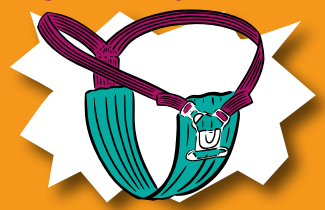
Another strength of the UNESCO framework is that it helped teachers to expand their understanding of Relationships and identify gaps within their provision, such as long term commitments and parenting, or inclusion and respect.

Mapping RSE Across the Curriculum (continued)

A holistic and inclusive approach to menstruation

A personal skills-based lesson on menstruating bodies can be explored in relation to the human body's changing medical, cultural and social historical journey (e.g. rites and rituals of menstruation or sanitary product inventions through the ages).



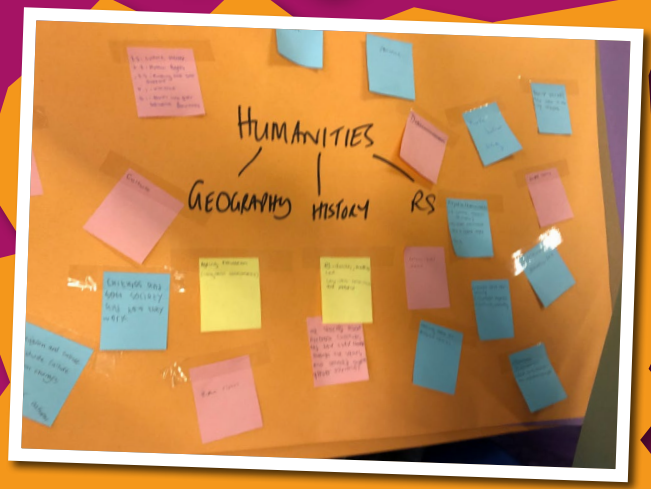


What is a Hoosier sanitary belt?
www.mum.org/hoosier.htm

They could be explored through economics and geography (e.g. the tampon tax, or the un/ availability of sanitary products across the world). Doing so, might enable a rich discussion of gender equity and rights, provide some deeper understanding of why shame and stigma endure for many girls and women, and what people, including children and young people, are doing to address this.

"RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions. This means that each Area of the curriculum and the range of subject disciplines within them each have a unique contribution to learning in RSE. RSE should draw on all Areas to allow learners to make connections between their learning in RSE and the wider curriculum, understanding historical, cultural, geographic, physical, political, social and technological perspectives and influences on RSE issues. This also helps avoid a 'single issue' approach where each lesson covers a different RSE issue, isolated from other learning. Schools should consider what each Area can authentically bring to an understanding of RSE. This should be meaningful and should avoid superficial or tenuous links"

(Welsh Government 2022, RSE Guidance)



Taking the mapping exercise back to school

Several teachers repeated this exercise with staff and pupils, using it as a way of mapping practice whilst also introducing their schools to the expanded definition of RSE as a holistic and cross-curricular area of learning.

One teacher created images for each of the UNESCO topics to enable younger children to engage in the exercise. As further discussed below this has enabled schools to start to consider key areas where there are gaps in the RSE curriculum, providing useful starting points for creating a new curriculum.

For teachers who felt overwhelmed by the task of creating a new curriculum the UNESCO framework has proved useful as a way of focussing activity around one key concept, with a view to building capacity across other areas in the future.

The Creative Audit: towards a co-produced and empowering RSE

The creative audit is a tool that enables teachers to co-produce the RSE curriculum. It offers teachers a template that they can adapt and use to engage children, young people and staff in creative activities designed to help share their views and experiences of RSE. Teachers are encouraged to work with pupils and colleagues to create darta*, to analyse it and to find creative ways of sharing the experiences that it captures across the school and the wider community and to use these experiences as the starting point for designing their RSE curriculum.

Audit *(noun)*
From the Latin *auditus*:
a hearing, a listening, to perceive

Why a creative audit?

Creative methods can support you to create safe and inclusive environments where all children and young people are listened to. By using a wide range of expression you can create spaces for children to feel, think, question, and share sensitive or difficult issues, without revealing to much of themselves.

As a tool it is grounded in article 12 of the UNCRC and the core principles for RSE as set out by Welsh Government (2020).

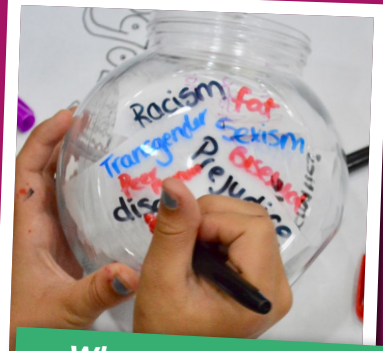
ARTICLE 12: You have the right to say what you think in all matters affecting you and for your views to be taken seriously

WHAT IS DARTA?
Generating views and experiences using arts-based methods
Data + Creativity = DARTA

* Darta refers to data that are created using arts-based methods. It is a concept that helps teachers think differently about 'data', which is usually understood as referring to statistical data, or to qualitative data that is only discursive – containing words and quotes rather than objects and materials that capture experience through engaging in creative activities (see ***Renold*** 2018)

Making Darta

The creative audit is central to the professional learning programme design. It enables teachers to apply the learning from the initial workshops and to find out more about RSE in their schools. At the initial workshop teachers are given time and support to design their creative audits. The programme design meant that teachers were able to try out some creative methods and approaches as part of the initial workshop, before having the opportunity to adapt these and put them into practice in their schools.



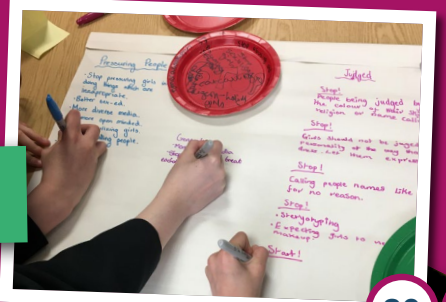
What JARS you about RSE in your school?

Run(a)way ideas for a rights-respecting school

Many of the teachers used activities from the initial workshop (e.g. ***RSE Runway; Stop/start plates; Jars***), although others also designed their own or adapted activities to meet the learning needs of their pupils. Most teachers also engage staff in their creative audits, with some also reaching out to parents and governors.

Sometimes teachers report feeling initially apprehensive about doing a creative audit at their school and overwhelmed by the task of building a new RSE curriculum, or adapting their existing programme of work.

Sharing ideas and darta with teachers and workshop facilitators often gives many a confidence boost and on-going support.



What needs to stop or start to make RSE better in your school?

The creative audit (continued)

Sharing Darta

When follow on workshops are possible, teachers have the opportunity to share their darta and their analysis of the findings from their creative audits.

These 'follow on' workshops can provide the opportunity for teachers to share and discuss any concerns or difficulties arising from their projects with each other and with the workshop facilitators. Teachers are able to gather ideas for resources, activities and approaches that they could use and adapt in their schools. See the Teachers' ***Run(a) way Reflections*** for a summary of teachers' views about their learning journey.

Turning darta into dartafacts: making article 12 come to life!

In the workshops teachers are encouraged to consider what's doable about who and how they want to share the findings of their creative audit with. The aim here is to provide an environment where the whole school and wider community can interact, learn together, ask questions.

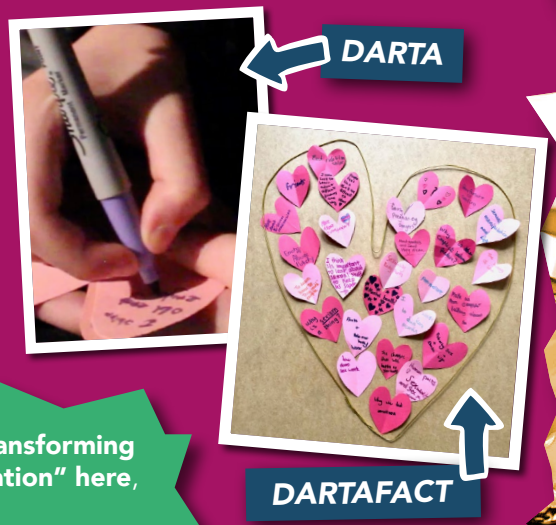
Some teachers have used the darta at an INSET day to inform teachers and governors about what children and young people were learning about and/or wanted the school to provide on RSE topics.

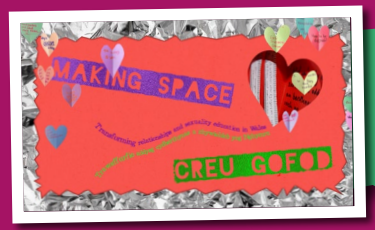
One teacher created a film about what they had implemented from their creative audit. The film not only shared how the school is listening, responding and acting upon children and young people's views, it also operated as a catalyst for further creative audits with different year groups.

> Darta become Dartafacts when they leave the environment they were created in and are reassembled in new ways for new audiences to interact with.

Another teacher adapted the JARS activity. She invited 120 Year 7 students to privately and anonymously post in their RSE JARS what they would LOVE to learn about in their RSE lessons.

The LOVE-RSE hearts included almost every aspect of the new RSE, from one word statements such as "RELATIONSHIPS", "BABIES", "LGBTQ" and "EMOTIONAL ABUSE and PUBERTY" to longer descriptions, "I would love to learn about different genders and why people feel like they are different to others", "I think it's important to learn about sexual stuff to keep us safe", "I want to learn about how to get a girlfriend".





Watch the film **"Making Space: transforming relationships and sexuality education" here**, to see this activity in action!

The creative audit (continued)

WHAT, IF AND HOW?

One teacher created a display based upon their collection of primary school children's views (age 10-11) on the suggested WHAT, IF and HOW activities from the creative audit workshop.

WHAT

RSE issues have you learned about?

"Sex organs and sex"

"I have learn that people's body image changes through the years"

"I know your body changes how babies are made. Also the three main topics of gender and how some people are transgender. Also some people can be born with female sex organs and male sex organs"

"I know what gay means because I live with someone who is gay and I respect it. I don't joke about it like people do"

HOW

did you learn about RSE?

"I have learnt from my mother, films and the school nurse. My mother tells me about pregnancy and you don't have your period (then)."

"the films like Twighlight have sex in it and that's how I know. The nurse told me about puberty"

"I learnt about these things from my sisters"

"with films and TV programmes like F.R.I.E.N.D.S."

"I found out young and when I shouldn't of. But I have also had some lessons in school. My mum gave me a book about everything that is changing for me. We also watched a film in school"

IF

you could design your school's RSE, what things would you stop or start? What would you want to know more or less about?

"I think people should talk about gender and what the sex organs can do in Year 5, periods and puberty in Year 6 and how babies are made in Year 9"

"I would like to know more about sex"

"If I got taught in a younger age, I think we would be immature"

"What if I did not learn about it, I would not have a clue about it!"

"Could you teach us how to put a condom on"

"Ask questions that are a bit embarrassing and I will like an answer"

"Transgender"

Teacher reflections

At the end of the programme, teachers are invited to participate in a series of creative activities that allow them to reflect upon their learning journey. This section shares some of their thoughts and experiences.

In summary, the professional learning programme increased teachers confidence to prepare for the new RSE curriculum throughout their schools. This was a shift from the beginning of the programme when teachers felt concerned about potential embarrassment and resistance they may experience from staff, parents and pupils to the changes that were coming.

The creative audit provided teachers with an opportunity to put the learning from the initial workshop into practice and to receive expert support in designing and delivering a programme of work in their schools, as well as the opportunity to share practice with others.

Teachers valued the flexibility of the programme, the level of support from the facilitators during and in-between workshops and the opportunity to learn about and share best practice and experiment with new ways of working with a more holistic and co-produced curriculum.

FEEDBACK RUNWAY

Teachers were invited to think up their own questions to answer. Our only steer was that each question should allow them to anonymously share and evaluate their learning journey.

What was your favourite part?

"The group was a safe space. I always felt comfortable talking and sharing views"

"Seeing what others had done have done and being inspired"

"The audits! Conducting the audit and it going well. Empowering!"

"Hearing about others' audits and seeing the darta"

How has/will the course made a difference?

"Inspiring and empowering. Ready to make changes"

"Forces a whirlwind of ideas, thoughts and processes that would have been lower on priority list"

"I feel well-informed and able to lead RSE in my school"

What would you do differently?

"Meet with pupils more and get parents involved in the audit earlier"

"The old toolkits just don't work anymore. Bin them."

"Make more time and prioritise the RSE inquiry."

What advice would you give to someone starting the programme?

"Be open to ideas and share. Listen to your learners"

"Do what is right for your school. Get inspiration form others in the group, but don't compare what you have done/not done"

"Have a subject lead. Meet with your senior leadership team first"

What was your least favourite part?

Time! "Lack of it!"

"Presenting our findings"

"Time restraints"

What support do you need to move on?

"Resources"

"Support from SLT, governors and class teams"

"Mapping across the curriculum"

What do we have now that we didn't have before?

"Buckets of confidence and a vision"

"A way forward, ideas, guidance and correct documentation"

"A support group and network - collaboration"

Other

"Thank you for giving us so much time, resources and support. I feel confident learning RSE in my school"

"Thank you! I didn't know I was so interested and passionate about RSE and its potential"

"I am so grateful for being part of this training – it is inspirational and achieveable. THANK YOU!"

STOP, START and CONTINUE

We also asked teachers to write what they would like to **STOP** (red plate), **START** (green plate) and **CONTINUE** (purple plate) in relation to how they were now approaching RSE in their school.

STOP looking for easy fixes and toolkits. There aren't any made just for you!

CONTINUE to develop and update a suitable bank of resources and share good practice with others

START thinking cross-curricular: topics, themes, holistic

STOP assuming I know what students want to learn / know

START engaging pupils in the delivery and planning of RSE

CONTINUE making it relevant and mean something

START collecting more darta

STOP being concerned about parent backlash

CONTINUE listening to pupils on an individual level to ensure that RSE is 'fluid' in relation to their changing needs.

START developing staff confidence and consistent delivery on a whole school level

STOP the formality of a lesson – room to breathe and laugh encourages confidence

STOP teaching RSE as a singular, discrete lesson

CONTINUE creative methods of learning about RSE and researching holistic RSE in my setting

START looking deeper into RSE and gaining understanding from a child's point of view

STOP trying to change everything at once

CONTINUE to believe that ALL staff will get on board with RSE

START being proactive in developing ideas to use creatively

OUR UNICORN MOMENT

We asked teachers to write down one moment that had previously been unthinkable or undoable before they participated in the professional development programme.

How engaged and positive pupils responces would be.

Collecting data!
Staff Support!

Developing a ALN sow with other ALN professionals

Talking seriously to a fellow group of professionals about RSE in my school - presenting this made me appreciate the progress made even more.

I never thought the pupils would enjoy as much as they would!

Positive reactions of both pupils & parents about content so far.

Begun to envisage the shape of RSE for the future

CUSHIONING COMMENTS FOR FUTURE COHORTS

Finally, we asked teachers to write on reflective strips one message that they wanted to share with the future cohort of teachers participating in the professional learning programme that would support their journey.

Section 4

Starting Out with a Creative Audit

BRANCHING OUT

Starting out

I'm a foundation phase teacher in a Welsh primary school with approximately 180 pupils from Nursery age to Year 6. The school was established within the last decade in response to the increasing demand for Welsh-medium education.

Our junior department is still relatively small but our infant department continues to grow on a yearly basis with 30 children currently in our reception class. Two years ago I was appointed as Healthy Schools Coordinator and at the last minute our head teacher nominated me to come on the professional RSE learning programme.

School

Primary school (Welsh Medium).

Creative audit participants

18 children (Years 5 and 6), 15 staff.

Creative audit activities

STOP/ START plates;
UNESCO image mapping.

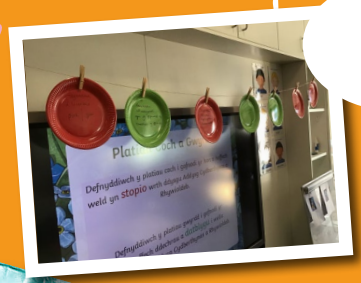
Making RSE Matter

Everybody is different;
Fingerprint tree;
Wiring our Bodies;
Moving with our Feelings.

My creative audit with teachers

I started by doing a creative audit with staff at my school. I had 45 minutes to work with all staff as part of an INSET session. I used the CRUSH cards as a way of opening up conversations about RSE. This led to staff talking about their own experiences of RSE and how they learnt about sexuality and relationships.

When I talked about the changes to the RSE curriculum staff were very supportive.



They felt that they had received very little RSE at school when they were younger and could see the need for positive change in Wales.

Next we used the ***UNESCO themes*** to map what RSE is currently being delivered at our school but we ran out of time.

Bringing everybody together to share what we are all doing was useful, because it has helped us realise how much RSE we are already doing embedded within the different areas of learning.

Finally I asked staff to use red and green plates to write down practices they wanted to stop and start for future RSE provision within the school.

Children's Creative Audit (Part 1): breaking the ice and exploring RSE themes

Next I worked with 18 children from Years 5 and 6. I didn't know the children very well and have never taught this age group before so I decided to start by doing some creative activities centred around some RSE themes.

I took the children off timetable for the day and used some of the Primary AGENDA activities to explore themes of feelings, bodies and emotions, diversity and difference.

I wanted to break the ice, have some fun and get to know the children, before diving in and asking them about their experiences and opinions about RSE curriculum.

Difference and Diversity

We started by watching the youtube videos ***"Everyone Is Different" by Lanny Sherwin and 'This is me' by The Greatest Showman Cast.*** This was followed by the Fingerprint tree activity. We drew a tree and then filled the trunk and branches with our fingerprints. We used a magnifying glass to look at our fingerprints in detail and talked about the fact that we are all similar but unique. We made notes around the tree about things that are similar and different between us in our group.

Wiring our bodies

This activity was adapted from the Primary AGENDA resource Wyred Bodies (see ***www.agendaonline.co.uk/everybody-matters***). We each made a pipe cleaner body and then talked about how we would take care of them. We made a list of what you need to do to keep yourself and others safe and then for the rest of the day the children looked after their 'bodies'. They took this really seriously. One child made a blanket to keep their body warm when they went outside.

Moving with our feelings

The children moved their bodies to two songs - one sad song *(Bridge over Troubled Water by Artists for Grenfell)* and one happy song *(Happy by Pharrell Williams)* and then talked about how they felt. We used some sentence starters to encourage children to talk about their own bodies and feelings - I feel good in my body when… I feel bad in my body when… Then they split into two groups and each drew a body outline to show how they had been feeling - one sad body, one happy. They swapped 'bodies' and annotated them, writing their feelings and experiences in and around the body.

STOP / START plates

Finally we moved on to having a discussion about RSE. We used the red and green plates to talk about what the children liked and didn't like about RSE. It was difficult because they didn't know much about what RSE is and so weren't able to give very much feedback.

I didn't think that the children would open up to me in the first session because I don't usually teach them, but they really did. They loved the activities and the discussions and told me that they wanted to do more.

Children's creative audit (Part 2): mapping RSE at our school

In the second session we had more of a focus on mapping and evaluating RSE at our school. I asked children to share their thoughts and feelings on 10 topics from within the UNESCO themes, using a set of images developed by one of the teachers on the professional learning programme. It was really helpful to have the images as prompts for each of the topics, particularly as they showed diverse relationships and communities. This helped the children to be inclusive in their discussions from the start. For each topic I asked the children to use two different coloured post-it notes to map what they already know about the topic (e.g. families) and what they would like to know about the topic.

From this I learnt that the children at our school would like to know everything! Some of the topics they said they wanted to know more about were: different types of families, different kinds of relationships - including multi-faith and multi-racial relationships, relationships with disabled people, being friends with someone who's different to you, two women / two men loving each other, how disabled relationships work, sexuality, sex, babies, people of different shapes and sizes and body image. They also said that they wanted to learn about these things more than once in primary school and for talk about sex and body parts to become more normalised and less taboo.

Key creative audit findings – children

1 **All children wanted to know more about all RSE topics.**

2 **Children's current level of knowledge and understanding is uneven.**

3 **Children were keen to share and to learn from their peers in open discussions.**

The creative audit made it clear that the children at our school are keen to engage in RSE and want to share and learn from their peers in open discussions.

I learnt that the children know a lot already but they want to know much more! I also realised that not everything they know is correct and it is clear that some children know much more than others.

There was a particular child within the class that already had a lot of knowledge about sex and relationships. She openly spoke about her feelings on different types of relationships and whilst many of the other children said that they understood what was being said I wasn't sure that they did. It's clear that we need to create a level playing field so that all children are provided with the same knowledge to support their understanding.

What's next?

We are currently in the process of writing a new RSE policy for our school. Once this is complete we will make RSE compulsory, with no parental opt-out from September onwards. We will be letting parents know and offering them an open evening to discuss any questions or concerns that they may have.

I'm also going to work with the teachers to map what we are currently delivering across the new six RSE themes that were recently announced by the Welsh Government.

Once we've taken stock of what we are currently doing we will plan a way forward for our school.

Starting out

We are a special school for young people aged 3-19 and have around 200 children and young people on roll. Two years ago two senior members of staff at our school attended the RSE professional learning programme. At that time we were delivering RSE (or SRE as we used to call it) using materials from the local health board, embedded within our PSE curriculum. As senior leaders we had responsibility for wellbeing and overseeing RSE at our school, but delivered very little RSE ourselves.

School

Special School (age 3-19).

Creative audit participants

29 young people (age 7-19),
20 teachers,
80 teaching assistants.

Creative audit activities

CRUSH cards;
What Jars Us?;
Multi-Media Pupil Voice.

Making RSE Matter

UNCRC Canvases;
Relationship Rocks;
RSE Mondays.

Our creative audit

Staff Jars and Crush Cards

We started our creative audit by working with our whole staff team to complete a staff audit. We are a large staff team of 100 people so we worked in small groups using the CRUSH cards to get people talking about different RSE themes. Next we asked them to think about what 'jars' them about RSE.

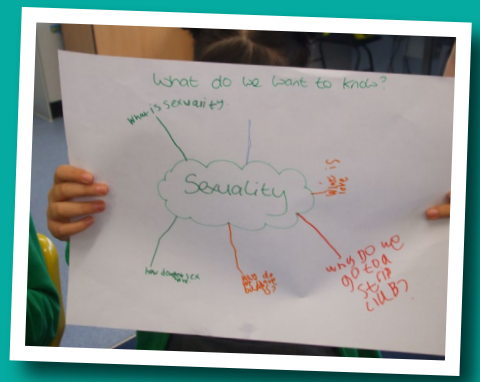
We gathered all the 'jar' responses on post-its and found that the main themes were:

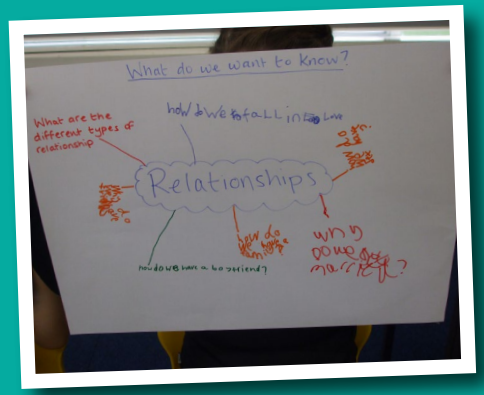
Capturing Pupil Voice: sound, pictures, mind-maps and an e-book

Initially three different age groups (KS2/3, KS3, KS4/post 16) of young people participated in the creative audit with the support of their class teachers and teaching assistants.

In each class we used questions about relationships and sexuality to open up a discussion and to find out what young people already know and what they are curious about.

With each group we used different questions and different methods to capture young people's responses, depending on the age and ability of the group. In the KS2/3 class, we asked young people questions about friendships and audio recorded their responses. The group then worked together to choose pictures and create an e-book that showcases the questions and their responses.





For the KS3 class young people created mindmaps about Relationships and Sexuality to find out what they already know about relationships and sexuality and what they would like to know. In the KS4 and Post 16 class we asked questions about what Relationships and Sexuality mean to young people, what they know and would like to know and how they would like to learn in RSE. Young people wrote their responses on post-it notes.

RSE questions from our S4 / post 16 learners

WHAT

What does relationships and sexuality mean?

'Sexuality means your sexual preference. If you are attracted to the same sex as you or a different sex'

'You can have lots of different relationships with different people like friends, family, co-workers, teachers, boyfriends and husbands. Most are not sexual relationships but some are'

What do you find difficult when learning about relationships and sexuality in class?

'I don't find it difficult; I help other people in class'

'I find it difficult to understand some words'

'I sometimes find it hard because of finding my own sexuality'

What do you already know about relationships and sexuality?

'I know that sexuality can be described as fixed or fluid'

'I know lots about internalised homophobia- this is when a gay man is homophobic to hide his own gay sexuality'

HOW

How can we improve the teaching of relationships and sexuality in our class?

'I think it needs to be spoken about more'

'Give advice on how to stay safe'

IF

What do you want to find out about relationships and sexuality?

'What percentage of the world know their sexuality from a young age, maybe before 10?'

'Why was being gay a problem in the past?'

Towards a needs-led, developmentally appropriate RSE

From doing this exercise we learnt that there is a wide variation in young people's knowledge and understanding about RSE.

At KS2/3 we found that young people have a basic level of understanding about friendships and that they require a high level of support to explore this and articulate their views. In the KS4 and Post 16 class however we found that there was already lots of good RSE practice going on. This was reflected in the fact that the group were able to give mature answers to the questions they explored about relationships and sexuality. Their responses - recorded anonymously on post-it notes - showed a clear understanding of terminology and a high level of skill within our school context.

From doing the creative audit we realised that whilst many areas of the relationships curriculum are currently included through PSE, sexuality is not well covered.

In the KS3 class for example we found that young people had lots of questions about relationships and sexuality, in particular about reproduction, bodies and sex, but not much knowledge.

In this group in particular we noticed there was a high level of variation in young people's level of understanding, need and ability when it comes to doing RSE.

This degree of variation has led us to question whether it is appropriate for us to be grouping young people by age when delivering RSE.

Starting small

After the initial creative audit we decided to continue working with a small number of individual teachers and their class groups.

We tried out new activities and lesson plans, whilst at the same time continuing to create 'darta' and listen to young people to inform future changes.

UNCRC RSE Canvases

We wanted to embed the UN Rights of the Child across the RSE curriculum. To do this we worked with a group of 12 young people from key stage 3 and 4 and introduced them to the UNCRC. We had a discussion about our rights and talked about the meanings of each right.

Next we asked each young person to create a UNCRC canvas about one of the rights that they felt was important to them and that they would like to learn more about.

We used this to plan future lessons, and continue to introduce key 'hot spots' for young people through visual activities, using their rights as the vehicle to drive this. We are also using the UNCRC to structure school assemblies. Based on what young people said they wanted to learn more about in the UNCRC canvas project we decided to focus on the theme of 'safe and healthy'. We planned three lessons covering healthy and unhealthy relationships (see Relationship Rocks), safe sex (see Health Gloves) and online safety.

Relationship rocks

Each person had a box with a piece of material stretched over. They were asked to place rocks on the material to show the pressures on relationships and take them away to show how positive actions can relieve pressures. They also poked holes in the material using pencils to symbolise permanent damage and used water to wet the material as an example of an action that could weaken a relationship (make it wet) but that could be repaired (the material will dry).

Health gloves

Young people looked at different types of contraception and were shown how to put on a condom. Next the group created 'health gloves' by drawing round their hands and writing the five main aspects of personal health: emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual on each finger and `physical` on the thumb. They then looked at which aspect of their personal health a condom could protect against and cut off those that the condom couldn't protect against. They were left with only the thumb. They tried doing this with a latex glove and wearing the glove with all but one of the digits cut off.

As a class this prompted a discussion about the emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual conseuqneces and outcomes of sex and helped us to explore more holistically what makes sex safe or unsafe.

Building our RSE provision

Affirmative, trauma informed RSE

Several of the young people at our school have experienced sexual abuse. Some are non-verbal and autistic. Whilst doing the creative audit we realised that we need to further understand what strategies and resources to use to include these young people in RSE in a way that is safe and affirmative for all those involved. We recognised that there was a gap in terms of resources and expertise here and that we would need to get further specialist training. Two members of staff have attended specialist training and have been taking a lead on working with small groups of young people.

Working with stage not age

We have since set up an RSE Monday group where young people are taken out of class to do targeted RSE work. This has allowed us to experiment with grouping young people by ability and need, rather than by age, and allowing us to use methods and content that is developmentally appropriate to all those in the group. Increasingly we are building a bank of good resources and teaching materials for delivering RSE.

What's next?

Towards a whole-school approach

Throughout this process we have learnt a lot about how RSE is delivered in our school and where the gaps are. Our approach so far has been to work with a small number of around 6 teachers in the school who have particular skills or interest in delivering RSE. This has enabled us to develop capacity within the staff team and learn about special skills and expertise that staff members have.

We are currently moving towards a whole school approach to RSE and recognise that we need to train all teachers and teaching assistants so that they have the confidence and capacity to facilitate RSE in class time.

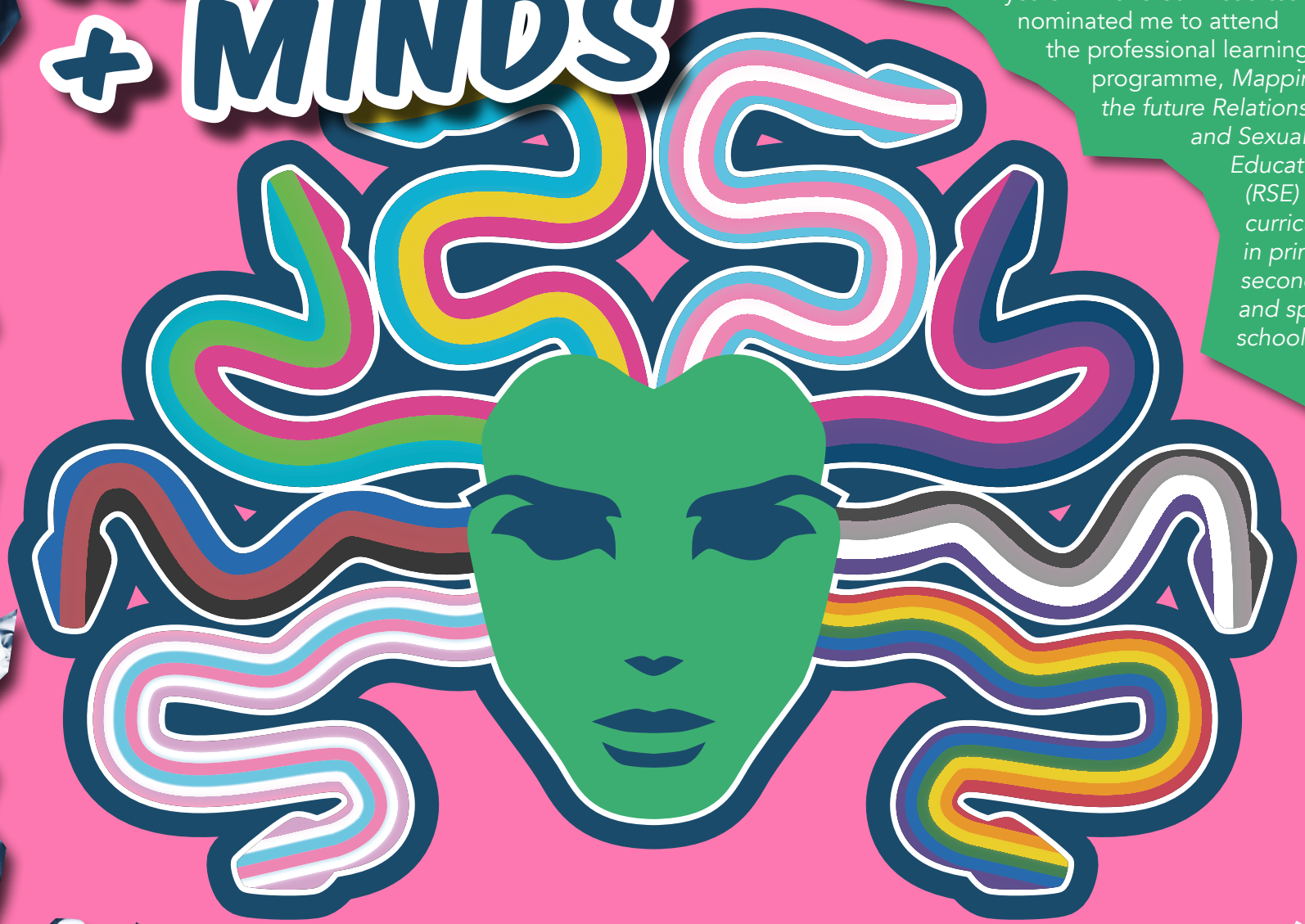
We are learning that a high level skill is required when teaching RSE to young people with ASD and complex ALN. Through the work with young people in the creative audit we also realised that some staff need further training around terminology and inclusivity as we noticed that when staff were helping young people to record their responses they were not always understanding and recording their responses in an inclusive way.

It is difficult to find time for whole staff RSE training as we - like all special schools - have packed training calendars and RSE has to compete with other priorities. Moving forwards RSE will need to be planned for in the School Improvement Plan and events will need to be entered into the calendar in advance.

Updating our RSE policy

Our RSE policy is long out of date and needs updating. We are going to use this as an opportunity to talk about RSE and the forthcoming changes across the school community. First we have a twilight session with staff to go through the work that we have been doing so far and draft a new policy. Next we will involve children and parents in a similar process. We see this as an opportunity to involve people across our school community and share the work we have been doing.

HEARTS + MINDS



Starting out

I'm a Maths teacher at a comprehensive secondary school in the South Wales valleys. I've had responsibility for PSHE at our school for about seven years. In 2018 our Head teacher nominated me to attend the professional learning programme, *Mapping the future Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum in primary, secondary and special schools.*

School

Secondary school.

Creative audit participants

82 young people (Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11).

Creative audit activities

What Jars You?, STOP / START plates, Runway for Change, Call out Cards.

Making RSE Matter

LGBTQ+ art group; health and wellbeing ambassador training; holistic RSE through the expressive arts; creating an RSE leaflet for parents.

Doing the creative audit

My first task was to carry out a creative audit at our school to find out young people's views on their RSE provision. I started out by working with two small groups of young people from years 10 and 11.

I wanted to work with some of the more vulnerable learners who I thought would benefit most from the opportunity to come together and talk about RSE.

I wanted to give them the opportunity to share their experiences of gender, sexuality, relationships and mental health and to use these experiences to inform the new curriculum.

I met for an hour with each group and I used the What Jars You?, Runway and STOP / START plates activities to open up conversations about RSE at our school. What I found was that what young people wanted to talk about wasn't really the RSE curriculum but their experiences of bullying and poor mental health. I was distressed to find out how undervalued young people felt by staff and the ignorance and the discrimination around gender and sexuality that they experienced accross the school.

The group were really engaged in the discussion but one hour wasn't enough! Some of the young people left upset as there wasn't enough time to finish the conversations or work through some of the issues that the session had brought up.

After the session one young person went home and wrote me a letter about his experiences of coming out as gay and how he wanted things to be different for other LGBTQ+ young people at our school.

My next step was to find out more about the RSE curriculum. I met with a group of 15 young people in year ten and eleven to explore what they were learning and what they wanted from the new RSE curriculum. This became my first RSE group. We used the CRUSH cards and sorted them into categories, which got the group talking about their experiences of RSE.

Next we created call out cards where young people wrote their opinions on RSE and how they would like to drive things forward at our school.

The creative audit made clear what I probably already knew - that there are big gaps between what we are teaching young people in the curriculum and what they already know and want to know.

Young people were critical of the overly biological approach that they feel we take to RSE. They said it sometimes feels like they are being taught about 'breeding' rather than human relationships and emotions.

They wanted to learn about the positive aspects of sex and relationships and to talk about things like intimacy.

They were clear that teachers need more training, especially with regards to LGBTQ+ lives and communities. They want teachers to be more away of the issues that LGBTQ+ young people may face so that they can help ensure that in our school community people of all genders and sexualities can express themselves as they are and feel accepted.

Creative audit findings

Young people want...

1. the 'sex talks' to include more and for RSE to be more engaging, less childish and to focus on the positive aspects of a healthy sexual relationship.
2. more on different types of relationships.
3. RSE lessons to be less awkward and less biological, so not about 'breeding' but 'human relationships'.
4. not to be separated by gender in RSE lessons.
5. staff involved to be more open minded and happy to discuss the positive aspects of sex and sexual relationships, such as intimacy.
6. teacher training to be updated especially in regards toLGBTQ+. They want people to be more aware of issues that LGBTQ+ young people may face.
7. to ensure that within our school environment, and within our communities, young people of all sexualities can express themselves the way they are, and feel accepted.

LGBTQ+ art group

A key finding from the creative audit was that young people felt that LGBTQ+ young people were not supported at our school. In response we have set up a new arts-based LGBTQ group.

The group is led by our artist in residence and includes over 12 LGBTQ+ young people and their allies across Years 8-11. The group has been running for 4 months and so far they have completed their first photography project with the school and the wider community. This included a series of images with faces painted with different LGBTQ+ flags.

The group have also begun supporting teachers to co-create an inclusive RSE curriculum by designing posters with LGBTQ+ facts. This activity was opened up to all Year 7s who each created a LOVE IS LOVE poster.

Inspired by the summer LOVE AGENDA conference at St Fagans (2020), the group are working towards an exhibition and digital story of its evolvement on the theme LOVE* IS ... The project has involved some young people exploring love across the curriculum, drawing from its Ancient Greek origins (agápe, éros, philía, philautia, storgē, and xenia).

Other young people have been researching contemporary identities and expressions, as well as artists, political figures and equality and discrimination laws around the world.

Their research is informing their collective and individual art projects.

One student is making a Medusa head with 25 snakes each representing different genders and sexualities.

They chose this number to connect to the story behind St Dwynwen's Day on the 25th January (Welsh Valentine's Day). Dwynwen allegedly turned her suitor into a block of ice after rejecting his sexual advances, and never married.

Health and wellbeing ambassadors

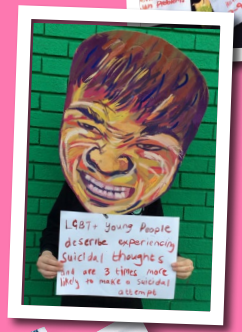
The creative audit made it clear that young people wanted things to change at our school. They took their ideas to the youth parliament who decided that they wanted to have health and wellbeing ambassadors at the school who could offer information and support to their peers. A group of 14 young people have just finished their training and are about to start their new role.

Doing Holistic RSE through the expressive arts

Facilitated by our artist in residence the expressive arts have been a really powerful way of bringing different areas of the curriculum together on a range of RSE issues.

Our Safer Internet Day 2020 activities included pupils exploring all of the things that young people should be free to be when online with **#freetobe** posters.

Fusing our Big Head Project with expressionism themes for Children's Mental Health Week our students created a series of unnerving visual statements highlighting the mental health needs of young people.



For ***British Science Week*** our photography group made digitally manipulated images combining makeup/ collage investigating the role of science and body image.

What's next?

Moving towards a whole school approach

Last summer I presented the findings from the creative audit to teachers at the Relationships and Sexuality Education conference at the All Wales Nation Centre. I also shared them with staff at our school as part of an INSET evening.

Responses from staff were mixed - some are very hopeful and supportive and others were resistant to some of the changes. We are working with this resistance slowly to try and create a culture shift across the whole school.

In March I'll be training the governors, sharing with them the work that we've been doing so far and we are already seeing the impact of whole school creative projects like "LOVE* IS …".

Mapping RSE across the curriculum and more creative audits

The RSE group that we set up last year have either left school or are buried in their exams so we've set up a new group of 25 young people in years 10 and 11 who have volunteered to take part. We are going to map what RSE is currently happening across all areas of the curriculum and use more creative methods to capture their experiences and hopes for RSE. We are also going to be working with key stage 3 young people to design a leaflet for parents about the new RSE curriculum.

INSIDE OUT

Starting out

Our primary school is in a valleys town with approximately 350 children on roll, from Nursery to year six including a KS2 learning support class for pupils with ASD. I am a teacher in the Learning Support Class for children with ASD. In 2017 I was also given the role of 'healthy schools officer' and completed the work involved in gain our Phase 3 Healthy Schools award. Our head teacher passed on information about the RSE professional learning programme and the creative audit which has become the focus for working towards phase 4 of the healthy school award.

School

Primary school, with specialist Autisic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) unit.

Creative audit participants

12 young people (Year 6), 33 members of staff.

Creative audit activities

What Jars You?; Mapping UNESCO key themes; Stop/Start plates; Diversity street; Learning walk.

Making RSE Matter

Inside Out; What Makes a Good Friend?

My creative audit

Panic!

The first thing I did after coming back from the first two days of the professional learning programme was panic! I felt overwhelmed and confused by the task ahead. I had been given 1.5 hours to work with staff at my school at an inset day and a morning session with some year 6 children and I couldn't see how I was going to cover everything that I had learnt at the two training days. I contacted Emma and Ester who encouraged me to start small and focus on one of the UNESCO key concepts.

**I felt overwhelmed and confused...
so I started small and focused on one of the
UNESCO concepts - relationships.**

One concept at a time: Relationships

First I met with staff. I started the session using a range of clips from adverts and films to spark discussion and open up conversations around RSE themes.

In particular I focused on relationships, gender identity and gender expression, equality and equity. I played the McCain 2018 advertising campaigns 'We are family' and 'Here's to love', trailers from the films *Wonder* and *The Boy in the Dress* and a clip from the *Wonder Years*.

In and out of our comfort zones

Next I gave an overview of what's happening with RSE in Wales and did the *What jars you?* activity to explore teachers' questions and concerns about RSE. This was followed by an introduction to the eight ***UNESCO concepts***, which I laid out on large sheets of paper on the floor, one concept per sheet. I gave my colleagues post-it notes and asked them to use them to map current practice across the school across the 8 concepts. We finished the session doing the STOP / START plates activity.

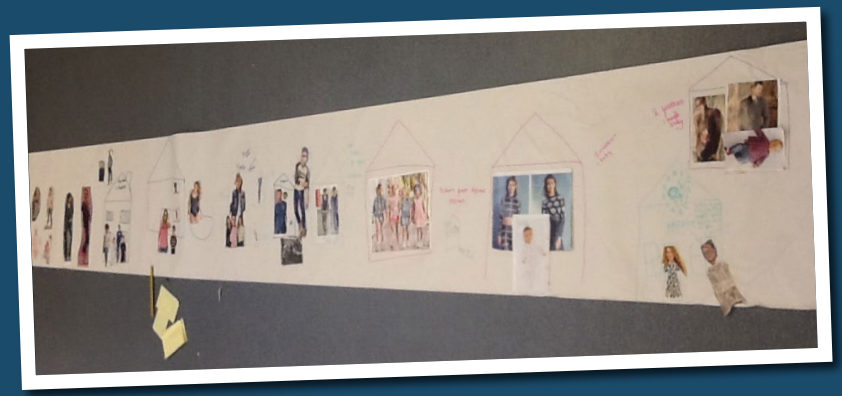
**Feedback from staff about
the session was very positive.
Staff seemed to realise they need to
move out of their comfort zones.**

There were some concerns and questions were raised about reactions from parents, the age appropriateness of some topics and how to address some of the difficult issues that we know some of the children are experiencing in their lives.

My creative audit

Diversity Street

With the children I started with the same set of clips that I had used with staff, which were a great hook to spark thoughts and discussion. I decided to focus on one of the UNESCO themes (Relationships), rather than trying to map all of them as I had done with staff.



I created an activity called **Diversity Street** where I rolled out a long piece of paper and asked the children to design a street that housed as many family and relationship variations as they could think of. They cut out pictures from catalogues and drew their own houses and families to create the sheet. I was amazed by the diverse identities and relationships that they chose to include. Next the children re-wrote the first UNESCO topic (Relationships) in their own words and used this to audit what they had learnt in school so far.

I created an activity called diversity street - I was amazed by the identities and relationships that they chose to include.

Relationships Learning Walk

We did a learning walk around school taking photos of displays where the different Relationship topics were being covered. We also mapped the other UNESCO themes. Children were more able to think outside the box than staff and could identify a number of extracurricular activities that matched the themes. For example the time when boys played the parts of the ugly sisters and girls played the parts of Joseph and Simba in school productions.

What do we want to Stop and Start to make RSE better

We finished the session thinking about what the children would like to STOP and START when it comes to RSE at our school using red and green slips of paper. Feedback on the session was very positive and the children didn't want the session to end. The children were very open-minded and comfortable talking about the issues raised. There were some initial 'gasps' from 1 or 2 children after other pupils used terms like 'transgender' but it sparked good conversations.

They keep asking me 'when we are going to meet up again!'

Children

STOP
Being so awkward when people bring up transgenders

START
Being more flexible in learning
Making us good lessons!

Teachers

STOP
Portraying the idea of a 'normal' family or relationship
Gender stereotyping through stories, activities and roles

START
Bringing more sexuality and gender education into lessons across the curriculum

Making it Matter

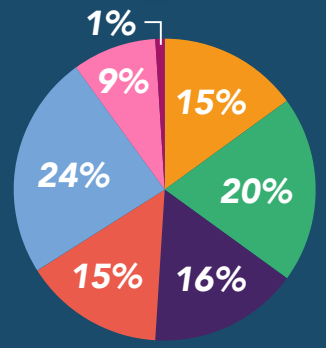
Minding the gap with post-its and pie-charts

From the darta collected and general feedback from staff and children during the initial creative audit sessions, it is apparent that we have a huge emphasis on developing skills for health and well-being in our school, with lots of interventions and strategies in class and around the school.

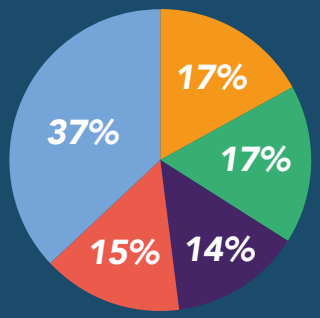
Staff and children both think that we are an inclusive school, promoting equality for all abilities, needs and backgrounds.

To try and understand where the gaps in our provision are, I organised the post-it notes that children and staff had created during the UNESCO mapping exercise into a table form. I also counted each post-it comment and converted the results into pie charts to create a clear image of which areas are covered well in our school and where there are gaps.

***Staff** mapping of current practice using UNESCO key concepts*



***Year 6 pupils** mapping of current practice using UNESCO key concepts*



- Relationships
- Values, rights, culture and sexuality
- Understanding gender
- Violence and staying safe
- Skills for health and wellbeing
- Human body and development
- Sexuality and sexual behaviour
- Sexual and reporductive health

More on sexuality, sexual health and puberty

From the charts I could also see from this that we do quite a lot on some areas such as Skills for Health and Wellbeing, Values, culture, rights and sexuality and Understanding gender, but very little on other areas relating to sexuality, sexual health and puberty.

This is perhaps unsurprising, particularly given the level of unease and apprehension from staff that I felt during the staff audit about moving forward with some of these areas. It is also clear that we need to do more work in this area as a school, not least because we have had several cases of girls starting their periods before the 'nurse visit' in Year 6. As a result we will be introducing puberty lessons from year 5 initially, moving on to starting in year 4.

Building our RSE provision: an action research project

Addressing relationships, violence and staying safe

Having completed the creative audit I shared the findings with colleagues and parent governors.

Having seen the findings, my colleagues in the Health and Wellbeing AOLE decided we should develop the work as part of an action research project we had been tasked with completing as a pioneer school. We decided to continue to explore the theme of Relationships and to also explore the theme of Violence and Staying safe. This is in recognition of the large number of children at our school who have experienced domestic abuse at home, some of whom have been placed on the child protection register, taken into care, sought refuge or who have had police involvement. Because of this we felt that it was particularly important for our children to have a good understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships and of safety and support strategies.

Working with external agencies and INSET twilight sessions

I met with the Healthy Schools Officer who offered additional training, support and resources

To support our project I met with the Healthy Schools Officer who offered additional training, support and resources for my AOLE colleagues and I attended a PDR twilight INSET training with our neighbouring Welsh medium primary school, who are also developing RSE across the school for their Healthy Schools award. We also had a whole staff twilight PDR training with the Healthy Schools Team.

Picture-Survey informing creative RSE pedagogy

We decided to start our project with a simple survey of children to find out about their ideas about families, friendships, healthy and unhealthy relationships. We used a pictorial questionnaire for reception children and a more in-depth online survey for year 6. This gave us a baseline understanding from which to plan and deliver a range of activities over the next two terms.

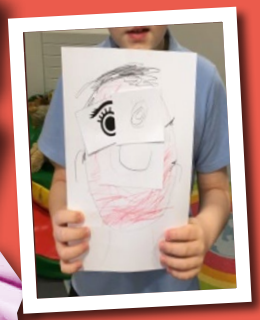
Exploring emotions and relationships creatively

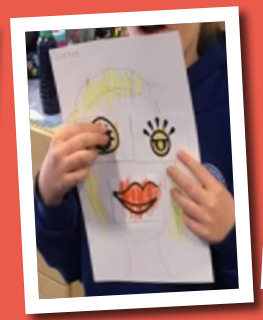
Our focus has been on stories, film-clips, songs, movement and art to explore feelings and to develop children's communication skills around their emotions.

Key emotions we have explored include feeling safe/unsafe, loved/unloved, controlled/in-control. We have also been supporting the pupils to recognise the signs of an unhealthy relationship to have the courage to speak to a trusted friend or adult if they have concerns about themselves or someone they care about. We have worked with my ASD class and the reception class, which is led by another member of the Health and Wellbeing AOLE.

Inside out

We watched the *Inside Out* film as a way of opening up discussions about emotions. I brought in the character toys from the film for us to use in the classroom and the children drew the characters or coloured pictures of them in. We named the emotions and the characters and then thought about other words for emotions such as sadness, joy and anger. We had a therapeutic arts degree student working with us and she did some art-based activities around emotions and colour associations. We took photos of the children pulling different faces and expressing different emotions and used this to talk about how we feel in different situations and when we are with different people. Finally the children drew portraits in the style of Picasso that captured some of the emotions we had been exploring.

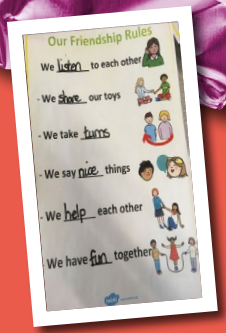


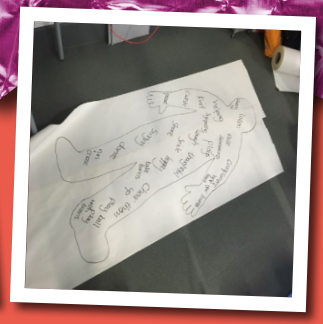


Towards a living curriculum

At the end of the project we repeated the questionnaire and found the results to be encouraging. We have noticed that the children are more engaged and are more able to make connections between the curriculum and their own lives.

During the activities, Reception children became more enthusiastic to contribute their ideas, and were more articulate when doing so. Children in the ASD class responded well to the characters from the film and using art as a medium to communicate their ideas. This also led to an improvement in their use of vocabulary.





What is a good friend?

We talked about friendship, what makes a good friend and what we like about other people. We drew around children in the class and wrote lots of words about friendship around the 'bodies'. I read out short scenarios with pictures to show different situations and people reacting in different ways. We sorted the pictures into 'Good friend/Not a good friend'. We made salt dough people and talked to them about what we think a good friend is and finally we came up with a set of class rules to show how to be a good friend.

What's next?

Rolling out our cross-curricular RSE: Slow and steady

We are going to continue to develop this area of work as a way of supporting personal and social development in the school. Our plan is to roll out the ideas across the school, beginning with the friendship activities as a safe way in for children and staff. It's been a slow process for us and there is still lots of work to do. We also have various curriculum councils as well as the school council, comprised of small groups of pupils from Y2-Y6 who meet regularly to discuss issues and set targets. This cross-curricular approach will enable pupils to bring up a range of issues and topics to be addressed, hopefully including relationships and sexuality.

SHAKING THINGS UP

Starting out

Three years ago I took on responsibility for RSE at our school. At this time RSE was delivered as 5 drop down days throughout the year plus a two week summer programme.

The curriculum needed an overhaul. It was very booklet driven and drop down days had low attendance. Young people didn't seem to think there was much point in RSE.

One year into my new role the head nominated a colleague and I to go on a professional learning programme about RSE. Our first task was to carry out a creative audit with young people at our school to find out their views on the RSE curriculum.

School

Secondary school.

Creative audit participants

500 young people (Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12) and 40 teachers.

Creative audit activities

Object sort;
What Jars You?;
STOP/START plates;
CRUSH cards;
RSE tree.

Making RSE Matter

Pride Day; LGBTQ+ group; 'Don't bottle it up'; 'Message in a Mirror'; Glitter Jars; LOVE RSE Jars.

Doing the creative audit

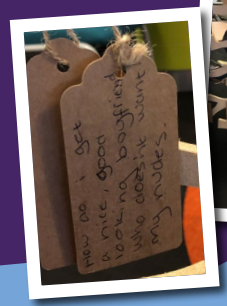
We started with year 9 for one day, talking each class off timetable for half an hour. We carried out the sessions in the drama studio where we laid out a set of objects that were lit up by the studio lighting. There was a toy gun, a bra, a doll, a tampon, an ipad, a teddy, a high heeled shoe, a striped flag, a pack of condoms, a football, a boxing glove, a mask, a bottle and some handcuffs. We asked young people to sort the objects into categories, but we didn't tell them what the categories were. They had to do this three times, ensuring that they used new categories each time.

The objects opened up conversations about the topics they were interested in - gender, relationships, body image, violence, pornography, anxiety, parenting. They could set the tone and pace of what they were comfortable talking about.

We also did the ***What jars you?*** activity where we gave each young person a jar and asked them to fill it with all their thoughts about what 'jars' them about RSE at our school. This was followed by the ***Stop / Start*** plate activity where each young person was given a red and green plate and asked to write what they would like to STOP about RSE (on the red plate) and what they would like to START about RSE (on the green plate). We hung the plates up and took them with us when we worked with the teachers so that they could hear what young people had to say.

Next we worked with year 10 on one of our Health and Wellbeing drop-down days. This time we used the ***CRUSH cards*** from the professional learning programme rather than objects. On the back of each card is a story about a young person, based on research. We asked young people to sort the images into categories of their own choice, before flipping the cards over and reading the stories about other children and young people's lives and experiences.

We asked our Design and Technology department to create a tree to help 'grow' young people's knowledge about health and wellbeing. Every young person was given a label and asked to write down a question they had and tie it to the tree.



We've used these questions to help us build the new curriculum and to spark conversation in the staff room!

Starting to listen: working with year 12

On the one of the Health and Wellbeing drop-down days we worked with the 6th formers and did the ***What jars you?*** and the ***STOP / START*** plates activities**.** Through these conversations we realised how little 6th formers knew about sexual health and safer sex. As a result we planned three RSE sessions for year 12 called *Drugs, Sex and Rock and Roll.*

We used the **DO...RSE session plan** to explore safer sex, a **British red cross session plan** to explore partying, staying safe and what to do if someone becomes unwell and a third session on drug use. Doing these sessions raised some alarms.

Young people thought the best form of contraception was withdrawal and that, anal sex was a lot safer than penis-in-vagina sex, because you can't get somebody pregnant.

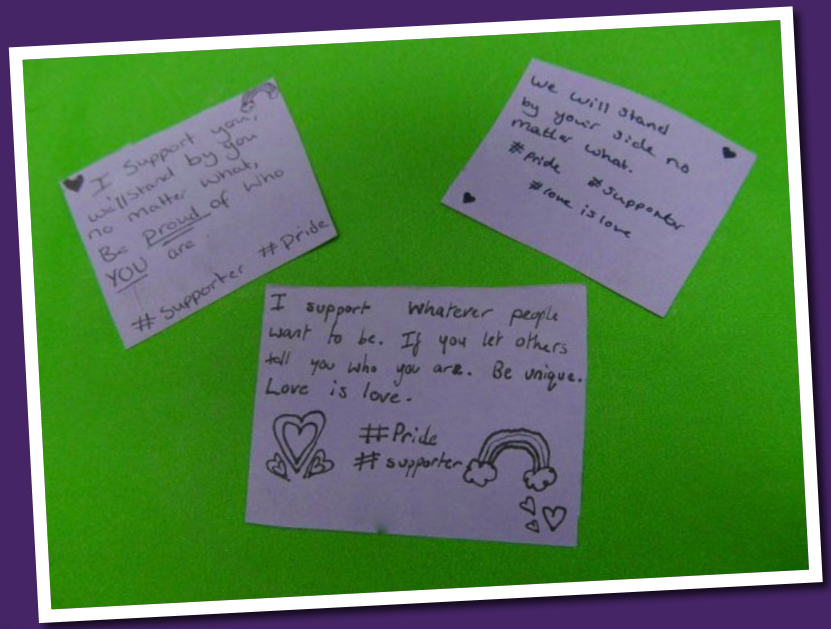
We've got a lot more work to do with year twelve. We never would have realised if we hadn't had the initial conversation and started listening.

Making it matter - with young people

In a couple of months we worked with around 500 young people as part of the creative audit, including those with additional learning needs. We were so inspired by doing the creative audits that we put everything the young people made into a film.

The film shows pictures of all the plates, jars, comments and questions from young people so that you can see for yourself what young people said and how passionate they felt about the issues that concern them.

From the creative audit we learnt that by far the largest issue that 'jarred' young people was the attitudes towards LGBTQ+ young people at our school and the lack of support, knowledge and understanding from staff.

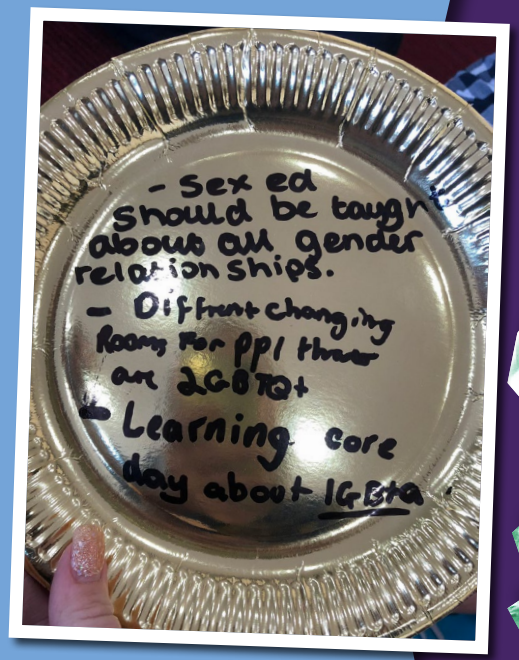


Young people felt that they were constantly judged for their looks and friendship groups, with most of the negative comments being directed at LGBTQ+ relationships. They noted that young people often made inappropriate comments and frequently used the word 'gay' in a derogatory way.

Young people also wanted more information about sexual relationships, STIs and abusive relationships. They also wanted to talk more openly and more often with staff about relationships and issues they face. They wanted these conversations to be less embarrassing and to feel like a normal part of school life.

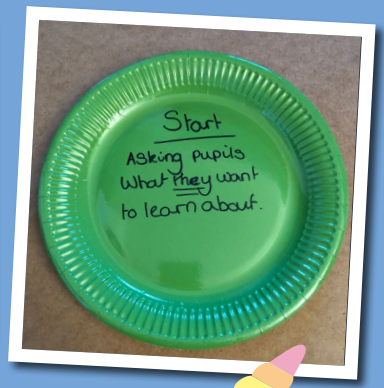
Young people's creative audit: key findings

1. **Young people wanted more information and support for LGBTQ+ young people**
2. **Young people wanted more relevant information about sexual relationships, STIs and abusive relationships**
3. **Young people wanted to talk more openly about relationships and issues they face and they wanted this to happen more often so it becomes more 'normal' and less embarrassing**
4. **Young people wanted more discussions around stereotypes and judgements for appearance and identity**



Making it matter - with teachers

Next we used the film to share young people's responses with about 40 staff at a staff inset day. We brought along all the things that young people had made - the health and wellbeing tree with young people's questions, the jars and the plates. When staff came in they started reading all the plates, which we had pinned up around the room, and were quite taken aback by some of young people's comments.



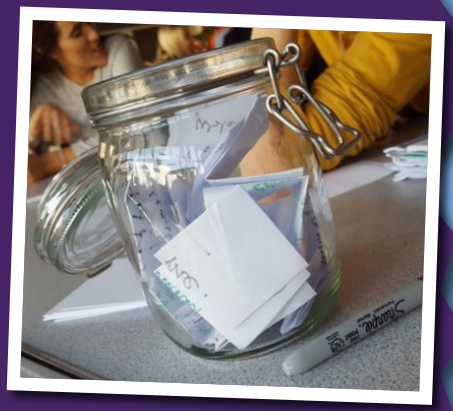
We found it much more powerful to show teachers what young people have said in their own words - rather than them hearing it from us.

We had fun with the staff. We showed a clip from **Mean girls (Don't have sex or you'll die!**) to kick things off and we did the CRUSH cards and the STOP / START plates. We were surprised at how similar teachers' plates were to those of the young people. Teachers seemed to realise that things needed to change at our school and that we need to listen to young people.

We also grouped teachers into their AOLEs and asked them to map what they are currently doing on RSE using the eight ***UNESCO key concepts***. This helped us find out what RSE is already happening across the curriculum as well as showing how a holistic RSE curriculum can be embedded across the school and within each AoLE.

Teacher audit: main findings

1. **Teachers did not feel that their knowledge and understanding (age/stage) was up to date enough.**
2. **Teachers were afraid of backlash from parents and inappropriate comments / discussion from pupils.**
3. **Additional training is required to give teachers confidence in delivery.**
4. **More regular opportunities for structured discussions are needed to normalise and reduce embarrassment.**
5. **More open discussions / different teaching styles are needed.**
6. **Some teachers felt that expert professionals need to deliver sessions.**



From the staff audit we realised that teachers need more training to give them the confidence to deliver RSE, but it's been too hard to get everyone together to do this.

We've had to find other ways of supporting staff and building capacity. This has included sending them the support cloud principles. We also offer drop in sessions to help with delivery during break times.

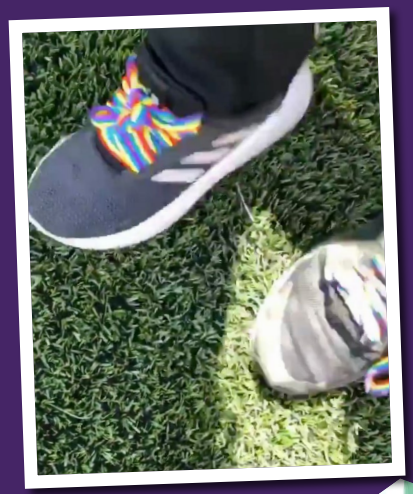
Building the RSE curriculum

UNDOD (Unity)

The first action we took after doing the creative audits was to start up a young person-led LGBTQ+ group.

The aim of the group was to develop the RSE curriculum specifically related to LGBTQ+ relationships and to support each other, fundraise and effect whole school change. The group gather weekly on a Friday lunchtime and we have met with a similar group at another secondary school to help them to focus their ideas and identify their priorities. They have called themselves UNDOD and we've worked with the art department to design an UNDOD logo. The logo has been graffitied onto our school wall.

In the summer we had a Pride day as part of the summer programme, which was a turning point for our school. The day was a celebration of diversity, inclusion and belonging and it felt like the moment at which teachers and young people understood what we are trying to achieve through RSE - loving who you are and being different.



We focused a whole lesson on the phrase 'that's so gay' as this was something that really came out of the creative audit as a problem at our school. We ran an activity on gender pronouns and created a timeline of LGBTQ+ rights. We had a session on rainbow hearts and Stonewall Cymru came and did their *rainbow shoelaces activity* for the day. UNDOD also made a PRIDE video, which has had over 500,000 views on twitter.

Mixed Emotions

Mental health also emerged from the creative audit as something that young people would like more support with so we've been trying out ways of exploring mental health creatively.

At a Year 6 immersion day we did a taster session called Mindful moments. We played calm music and did mindful colouring with the children.

Then we made glitter jars and used them to talk about how you can experience and manage your emotions.

We gave each child a jar and asked them to fill it with glitter, PVA glue and water. When you shake the jars you can see the glitter swirling around and then starting to settle. We now have some of the glitter jars on our desks and we use them in our teaching to reflect what's going on in the room when emotions are running high or there's a problem with behaviour. The 6th formers have seen them and now they want to make them too.

Building the RSE curriculum

Don't bottle it up

Mental health came up as a theme in the creative audit so we developed a project called 'don't bottle it up' .

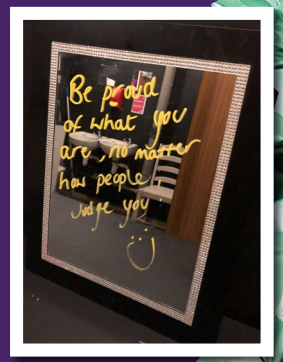
We asked everyone to bring in their empty plastic bottles and then gave one to each young person. With years 7 and 8 we talked about all the things that people bottle up and wrote these on coloured paper and stuffed them into the bottle.

Then we decorated the bottles with positive messages that young people wanted to say - like 'Always ask twice whether someone is ok'. Young people took these home. In year 9 we asked young people to write down all the advice that they would give to help people open up and stop bottling things up. They stuffed all this advice into plastic bottles.

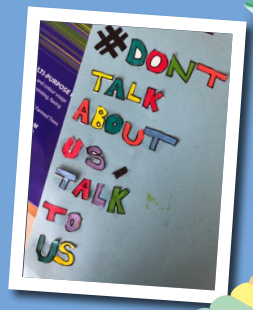
Mirror mirror

We've also been doing sessions on body image where we talk about appearance ideals and that it's what's on the inside that really counts. We gave everyone a paper mirror and asked them to design their own message for what they would like people to see reflected when they look in the mirror.

We are framing the best designs and messages and hanging them around the school. We are also secretly writing some messages on the school toilet mirrors!



Where are we now?



We've developed a new scheme of work based on the UNESCO thematic areas and the draft 'What Matters' statements from the Health and Wellbeing curriculum. We have time on the timetable every fortnight to work with year 7 and 8 around wellbeing and RSE.

We still have our drop down days but now, rather than teaching in isolation, the drop down days support what's happening in the RSE and Health and Wellbeing curriculum every fortnight.

The days are also now co-led by young people. One has been led by UNDOD - our LGBTQ+ group and one by a group of young carers.

What's next?

Next we want to work with governors, parents and with more year 6 young people on transition days. We also need to do more work with 6th form and get some more curriculum time with years 9 and up.

We're really proud of what we have done so far. It's been the most inspiring thing. Creating new ways of capturing pupil voice. It's changed how we teach, not just to do with RSE, but how we gather data and engage young people in curriculum development.

Young people's engagement has changed radically and their attendance on drop down days has noticeably improved since we've started this work.

They can tell we are listening to them, taking their ideas seriously and working with them to change the culture at our school.

IN THE MIX

(Re)starting out

I was incredibly lucky to take part in the RSE professional learning programme this year which has really reignited my passion for RSE. Over the past few months I've been working with a group of Year 8s transforming RSE in our school (hopefully!). It's my view that pupils are already exposed to a tsunami of false and damaging ideas and information about RSE that reinforce the negative messages and stereotypes that they encounter in the world around them. We have a duty, I think, to provide young people with a healthy counter narrative but at the start of this project I wasn't sure what that healthy counter narrative should be. I thought it was really important to listen to young people and understand their experiences of the world they are growing up in – which is very different from the one that I grew up in. I wanted to listen to them and find out what they want to learn and what RSE means to them.

It's my view that pupils are already exposed to a tsunami of false and damaging ideas and information about RSE that reinforce the negative messages and stereotypes that they encounter in the world around them.

School

Secondary school.

Creative audit participants

68 young people (Year 8).

Creative audit activities

Recipe book project: Ingredients – Whose in the mix?, Mixture – What jars you? Creative group project – what do you want to learn in RSE?

Making RSE Matter

Inside Out; What Makes a Good Friend?

With the forthcoming changes in the RSE curriculum, I decided now is a perfect time to ask SLT to go and present to them. I went and said to them that this is our opportunity to get this right, this is our chance to really involve kids in making RSE relevant and important for their lives. And they listened and gave me the go ahead for my project.

My idea was to work with Year 8 pupils to coproduce a recipe book for RSE that will travel with them into year 9 and be used to inform what I'm going to be teaching them in RSE. The recipe book will have **the ingredients** (the people who make up our school), **the mixture** (what pupils want to learn in RSE) and **the outcome** (the RSE scheme of work that I will produce based on what young people share with me about what they are experiencing an what they would like to learn)

My real dream is to have RSE embedded across the whole curriculum – be it in maths looking at the percentage of money spent on tax on sanitary products or in physics looking at different forces in relationships – but I realise that that will not happen overnight. So this recipe book project is my starting point.

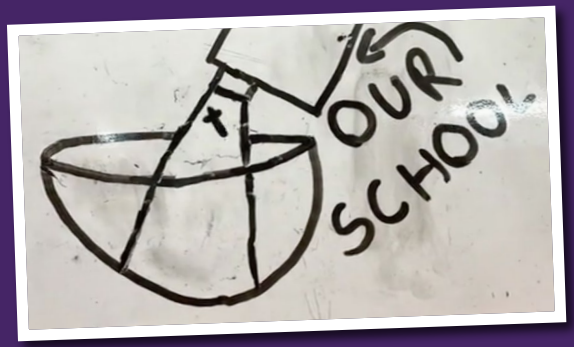
My idea was to work with Year 8 pupils to coproduce a recipe book for RSE that will travel with them into year 9 and be used to inform what I'm going to be teaching them in RSE.

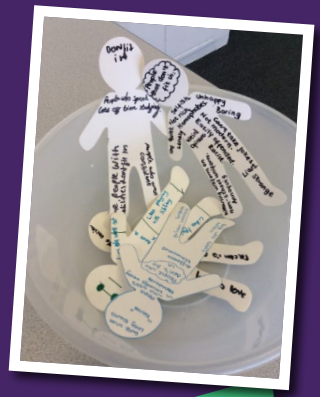
A recipe book for great RSE

I worked with two year 8 classes during their PSE lessons for half a term. Both were groups of 34 young people of mixed ability.

The INGREDIENTS: Who makes up our school?

We started with the ingredients and did some activities around who makes up our school. We had two mixing bowls at the front of the room. Young people each had little cardboard people that they used to write down all the different people that make up our school. Young people had to place their figures in a certain bowl if they thought they fitted into our school and the other bowl if they thought they didn't fit in. Then we discussed why some people fit in and others don't and what we can do to make our school a better place and more inclusive for everyone.

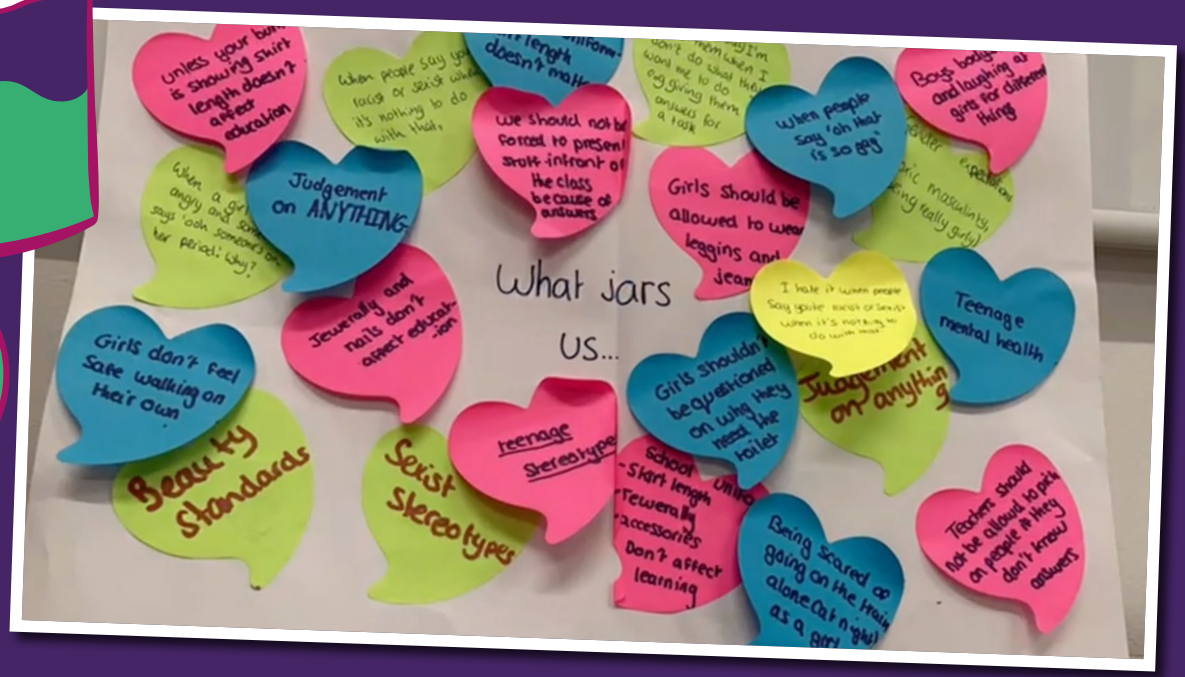




Watch our film here: vimeo.com/566744575

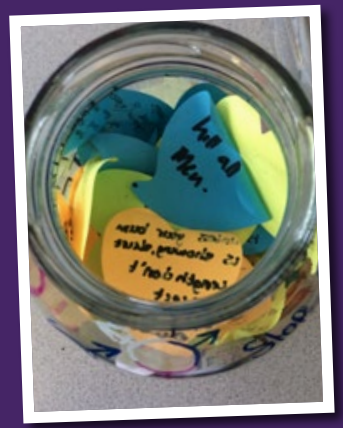
The MIXTURE: What would young people like to learn?

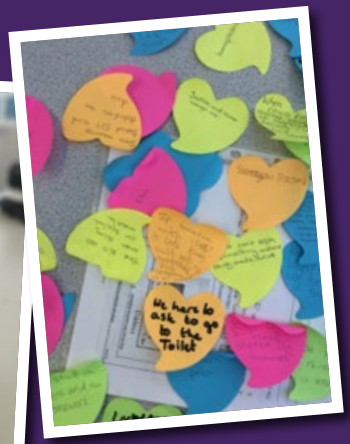
Then we moved on to the mixture of the recipe book that each class will have published and produced for them. So I spent some time with pupils looking at the forthcoming changes to the RSE curriculum. We went through the different RSE themes, unpicking them so that young people understood what the new curriculum is trying to achieve. Did they like the new curriculum? Did they not like it? Do they think everything they need to learn is everything included in there? What matters to them? What is important in their lives? How do they view the world?



We went through the different RSE themes, unpicking them so that young people understood what the new curriculum is trying to achieve.

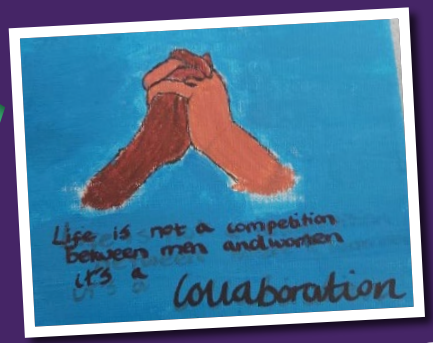
We also did an activity called ***What jars you?*** which was an opportunity for young people to write down all the things that 'jar', worry, anger or concern them about RSE, sex and relationships. They decorated their jars with messages about what they would like to change in the world, or in our school.

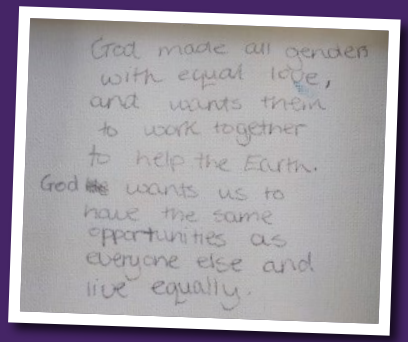




Then I divided pupils into groups. I gave the groups some time to get to know each other and get to work together and then I invited them to produce something that lets me know what they want to learn about in RSE, what's important to them and how they experience the world. I said that it could be absolutely anything – a piece of art, a video, music, it could be anything.

And young people have made things. They've done art work. One of them is composing a full on orchestral movement, I've got raps, I've got videos. I've got all sorts – all trying to make me understand what they want to learn about and in the context of the world that they experience. I've got some time on an INSET day and I've gone for the theme of **voices** and I'm going to show the staff what the pupils have produced so that the rest of my colleagues can also have the chance to listen to what young people have to say.





I gave the groups some time to get to know each other and get to work together and then I invited them to produce something that lets me know what they want to learn about in RSE, what's important to them and how they experience the world.

The outcome – cooking up the RSE curriculum

The outcome – which would ordinarily be a nice cake – will be a scheme of work based on what young people have said they want to learn. This will be what I deliver to them in year 9.

Young people have designed the covers for the recipe books themselves and inside I'll put everything I've learnt from them and the scheme of work that I'll create based on what I've learnt.

— RECIPE —

A summary of what I've learnt so far:

- Young people want qualified teachers and specialist providers delivering RSE. All other subjects are taught by specialists, so RSE should be too.
- Young people want all teachers to be trained in RSE, regardless of whether they are going to be delivering it. They can see that teachers don't know how to challenge certain comments and behaviours. Sexist language and the use of the word "gay" in the playground goes unchallenged as teachers seem unaware or unsure what to do.
- Young people want to be involved in the lessons and want to feel safe to ask questions. They want to help navigate where the lessons go and what they contain to make it more relevant to them.
- Young people want a recognition that all relationships are equal. They want lessons that challenge discrimination throughout the school and promote equality for all pupils of all genders and sexualities. Young people described the school as heteronormative, from examples in text books, to what's on the classroom walls. For example, in the design tech sewing room, all the images on the walls are of girls in fashion. There's a boy in my class who wants to be a fashion designer and he says he feels depressed every time he walks into that classroom.
- Young people want more RSE lessons. At the moment there isn't enough time to cover all of the complicated subjects that they need to learn or all the information and skills they need to learn.
- We are concentrating on the wrong things. Yes, sex is important, young people said, but they want to know how to handle relationships and how to behave and whats normal and all of that first. They want it to be a spiral curriculum where it moves on each time.
- Young people want to discuss and be taught how to understand the ways in which our friends, the media, religion can shape the way we understand relationships and sex. They feel angry about how the media in particular portrays certain relationships and bodies and leaves out others. For example, they said you'd never have a gay love island and how sex scenes in hollywood movies are all the same body type and you never see anyone disabled.
- RSE needs to consider all different experiences and needs, including special educational needs and disabilities.
- Young people need RSE that makes sense to the real issues they face, and it needs to be adapted if those needs change.
- Young people want parents to be involved and they want parents to have more understanding of what the world is like for them.

Learning through listening

During all the sessions I've run this term, above all, I have just listened to young people and I have also learnt so much. I just sat there and listened and they spoke and I've been aware of things I had no clue about.

For example, there was a young muslim pupil wsho stayed behind to tell me she doesn't feel that she fits into the school because its in our planners that they have to wear dark / black headscarves, whereas the other kids can come to school with different hair cuts, hair styles and everything else. And that's how she expresses herself, through her headscarves and she showed me pictures of her wardrobe at home with all her beautiful headscarves in. So I was able to take that information to the head and say, you know it says this in the uniform policy – is there any way we can get that removed? And now that's been removed and she came in last week with the most beautiful headscarf on and everybody's been really positive towards her and she's just so much happier.

When I think I'm doing a good job I'm suddenly taken aback by what they tell me and I realise – 'ok I need to rethink this'. #rethinkthis

I have just listened to young people and I have also learnt so much. I just sat there and listened and they spoke and I've been aware of things I had no clue about.

For example, the internet. They have got internet safety coming out of their ears, but in reality it does not relate to their lives. Yes, internet safety is important but they want the skills to know how to deal with what they see and what they get sent. Most of the unwanted content they receive is from their friends and they are not going to report their friends to the police and as much as they don't want to receive that content, they also don't want to lose their friend. So they need more than how to report malicious content. They need the skills and the power to deal with that themselves. So it's about saying – 'do you know if you share an image of yourself that you're not happy with that you can put a digital hashtag on that image now to stop that image from being shared anywhere on the internet?' Or there's a great app by Childline called Zipit which gives them back the power of being able to combat messages they get by giving them little memes to send back. There's loads of different ways to handle these experiences.

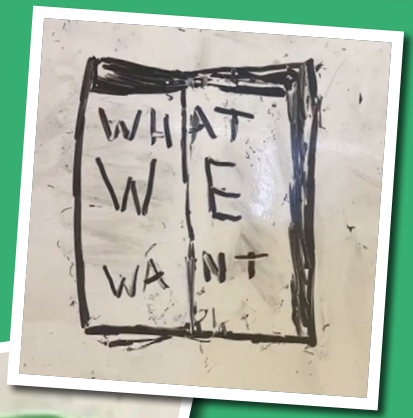
It's unbelievable how much I have learnt from just listening. I have learnt that they are excited about relationships and life and then it suddenly gets quashed. I have also learnt that RSE has to change quite frequently and it has got to adapt and be flexible because the pupils' needs change and because sometimes things happen, and we need to address those things.

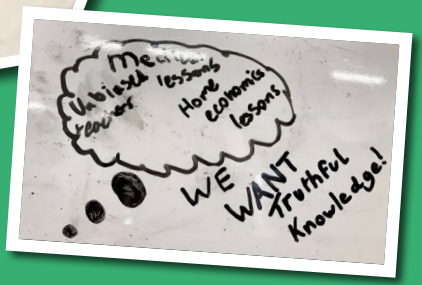
RSE is back

My long term aim is to collaborate with pupils, parents and local communities to ensure that RSE is embedded across all curriculum areas and that staff are upskilled through high quality whole staff training. In the short term I want to co-produce a spiral curriculum that is meaningful and have this embedded in year 8 by September 2021.

Things are already changing at our school. Our head is listening.

Things are already changing at our school. Our head is listening. He has put RSE back on the timetable for year 10 and 11 and I have my old job back as RSE lead. I've started interviewing for RSE champions who are going to work with me to bring about the changes needed. We are going to use the screens all around the school to convey all sorts of positive messages relating to each of the RSE themes we will be covering. We've got positive posters going up on the walls and the head wants whole staff training to change the culture in the school. It's exciting times for us.





I've started interviewing for RSE champions who are going to work with me to bring about the changes needed.

WE ♥ RSE

School

Primary school.

Creative audit participants

61 children and 35 members of staff.

Creative audit activities

What is love? Embodying feelings, Wyred bodies, Foiling feelings, Moving feelings. What jars you, STOP / START plates, curriculum mapping.

Starting out

I am a year one teacher and part of the Health and Well-being team at our school. We are an English medium primary school with around 420 children. It is a diverse school with many nationalities and languages spoken. I signed up for the RSE professional learning programme because I wanted to understand more about creative approaches to teaching RSE before the curriculum becomes statutory.

Making RSE Matter

Range of creative activities for all year groups to be trialled in 2021-22.

My creative audit

Working with children in the foundation phase

I decided to start my creative audit by working with the children in my own year group, which is year one. I started by exploring relationships and feelings with the children using creative approaches. I planned a series of activities and then delivered them to both classes separately.

Session 1: What is love?

In a P4C session, children were asked the question: "What is love?" Their responses were scribed and added to a large sheet of paper. All children made a heart using pipe cleaners and placed them around their ideas. Several of the children's ideas centred around the treatment of others. For example, being kind and helping each other. We discussed how we can show love for one another, especially as we can't hug each other at the moment due to Covid. The children then hung the hearts on the tree in our reading area to remind us to be kind to each other and that we are all loved.

The children then hung the hearts on the tree in our reading area to remind us to be kind to each other and that we are all loved.

What is P4C?

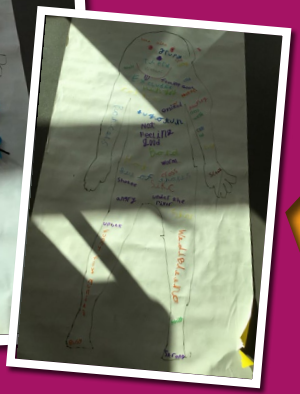
We have introduced Philosophy 4 Children in our school (P4C for short). It allows children time to think and formulate questions. They then can discuss their ideas, thoughts and feelings about a topic. It helps them to become more articulate, give reasons for their opinions, to listen to others and to agree and disagree respectfully.

Session 2: Embodying our feelings: inside and out

In our second activity we explored bodies and feelings. Taking inspiration from the AGENDA film and case-study ***'Every Body Matters'***, in this session one person volunteered to lie down and be drawn around to create a life size paper body.

We used the talking partners strategy to discuss all the different feelings that children have inside their bodies at different times of the day, week and year. This is a strategy where everyone takes part at the same time, rather than everyone putting their hand up and answering one at a time. Children then took turns to add feelings to the outline of the body and discussed times when they feel a certain way and why they might feel that way.

Finally each child made a pipe cleaner person to show how they were feeling at that moment. In pairs they shared their wyred bodies and tried to guess how their partner was feeling from looking at the pipe-cleaner person (see ***agendaonline.co.uk/wyred-bodies***). The partner then revealed how they were actually feeling. All children placed their pipe-cleaner person where they felt it should be around the body.



Session 3: Foiling our feelings

In the third activity children looked at the body full of feelings from the previous session. With a partner they took it in turns to think of an emotion and make an expression to show it. The partner had to first mirror the expression and then try to guess the emotion being expressed.

The children were then given pieces of foil to use as a mirror that would reflect and distort their image. Children discussed with a partner if the foil image changed the way they looked and felt. They talked about whether it was easy or hard to tell how someone is feeling on the inside by looking at their outward expressions. They decided that the outside and inside don't always match.

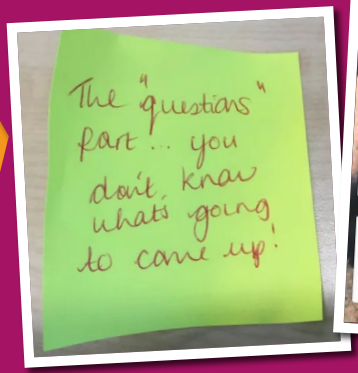
Session 4: Moving with our feelings

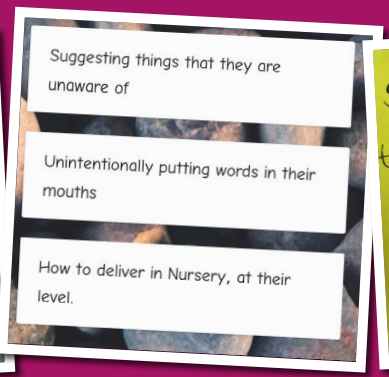
In our fourth and final activity children explored how feelings affect how we feel in our bodies, how we move and make contact with others. They tried moving in different ways in relation to feelings of happiness, sadness, excitement, fear and shyness. This progressed into making contact with others. The children discussed how they felt about making contact when they were in different emotional states. For example, whether they wanted to make contact with others, or how confident they were, whether they were thinking about themselves or another person's response. After the activity, children discussed how they might approach someone who was feeling sad, shy or embarrassed based on the way they felt in the workshop. Children suggested that they would try being quiet, kind and helpful when another child was distressed. Children thought of safe adults they could talk to if they had feelings they wanted or needed to share.

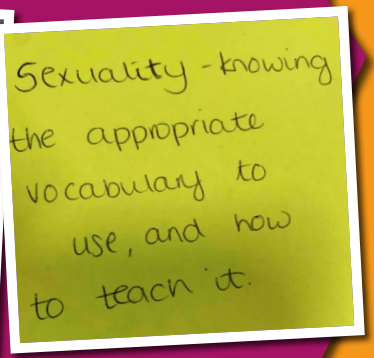
Children explored how feelings affect how we feel in our bodies, how we move and make contact with others

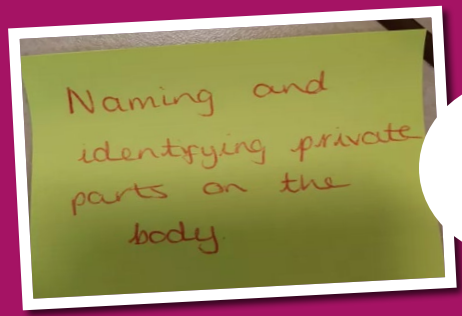
Working with staff

Since starting this project I have run three staff INSET sessions. The first session was an introduction to creative approaches to RSE, which was held online due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. Fifteen of my colleagues attended the session. We used padlets to take part virtually in the ***What jars you?***, and ***Wyred bodies*** activities and to go through the creative activities that I included in the creative audit. I started the session with *"What Jars you?"* and asked my colleagues to share 'what jars' them about teaching RSE in our school.









Teachers were open about their concerns and it was clear that teachers are not totally comfortable with RSE.

We also used the CRUSH professional learning resource to look at the different thematic areas (e.g. bodies and body image) and discuss briefly what might be covered for this theme. We created a mapping document for each year group to see what they cover already for each theme and in which Area of Learning. This helped to show that we are not currently using the arts to cover any of this work, with most of our RSE coverage being linked to Health and Well-being & Science.

I explained that we want to try to use as many creative approaches in the future when teaching RSE and make links to other areas of learning. I showed the staff a powerpoint of the series of activities that I had taught and explained the process. We then took part in the ***Wyred bodies*** activity. Each person made a stick figure using pipe cleaners to represent how they were feeling in that moment and another person in the session had to guess what they were feeling. The last activity was a Stop/Start padlet which teachers used to say what they would like to STOP and what they would like START happening at our school when it comes to RSE. It was clear from this activity that colleagues are committed to bringing about changes to RSE in our school to make it more *'integrated'*, more *'creative'*, teaching it more *'frequently'*, *'in more depth'* and *'across the curriculum'*.

We are learning through this journey that when it comes to RSE, teacher confidence in our school is low and that further training will be needed to enable staff to transform our current RSE provision. There is an appetite for change amongst the staff however and Senior Leadership buy-in is positive. Our Headteacher is glad I am doing this work and as a result of this project I have now been made RSE lead at our school.

Embedding creative RSE across the school

Since completing the creative audit I have created a set of RSE activity ideas from all year groups from Nursery through to Year 6. My focus is on creative approaches to RSE so I've included lots of arts based activities from the AGENDA resource and lots of P4C style sessions too. Through taking part in this project I have been reminded of how powerful the creative arts can be. I can see the ways that these creative approaches are helping children articulate (often without words) their feelings, emotions and connections to each other.

Since the initial session with staff I have run two further INSET sessions with a total of 35 staff. The second meeting provided an update of my professional learning project and the third was to go over all the activities for next year. I have asked all year groups to complete three activities over the course of the year, in addition to what they would normally do in RSE. After this initial trial we will work together to develop further content for our RSE curriculum. Hopefully by then we will have the RSE *what matters* statements and we can use these to help structure our new RSE curriculum.

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Mapping our RSE

Starting out

I'm head of department for post-16 at a special school and part of the middle management team. We are a multicultural school with over 100 pupils, approximately two thirds of which are boys. Half of our pupils are entitled to free school meals and 20% have English as an Additional Language. After taking part in the initial RSE professional learning workshops I went back to school and decided to conduct a creative audit with the groups of young people that I felt had the most urgent need of RSE.

School

Special school.

Creative audit participants

47 young people and 40 staff.

Creative audit activities

Celebrate being you; fingerprint tree; what do you know about……?; Wyred bodies; key questions; Crush cards; Stop/start plates; What jars you about RSE?

Making RSE Matter

Curriculum audit.

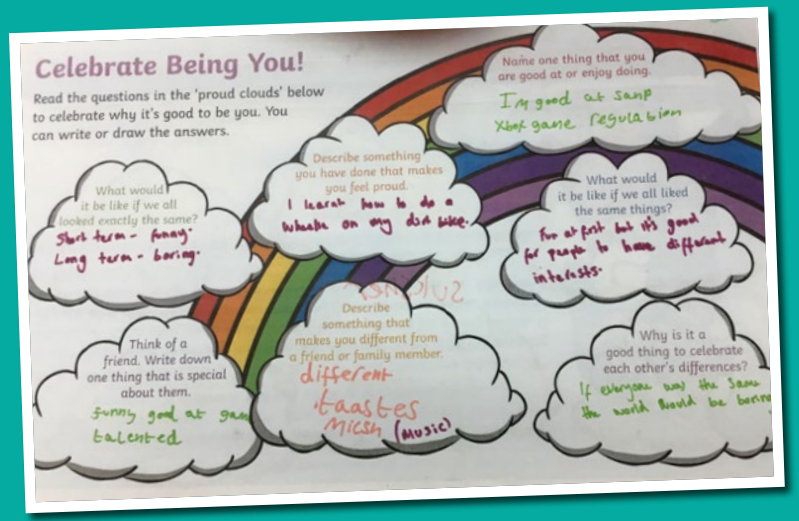
My creative audit

Working with young people

I worked with four groups of young people in total to complete the creative audit – one class of twelve pupils in key stage 3, another class of eleven pupils in key stage 4, a class of twelve from our post 16 higher ability class and another class of twelve pupils from our post 16 lower ability class. In total I used six different activities to complete the audit, selecting different activities depending on the availability and developmental needs of the learners in the group.

Celebrating diversity and difference

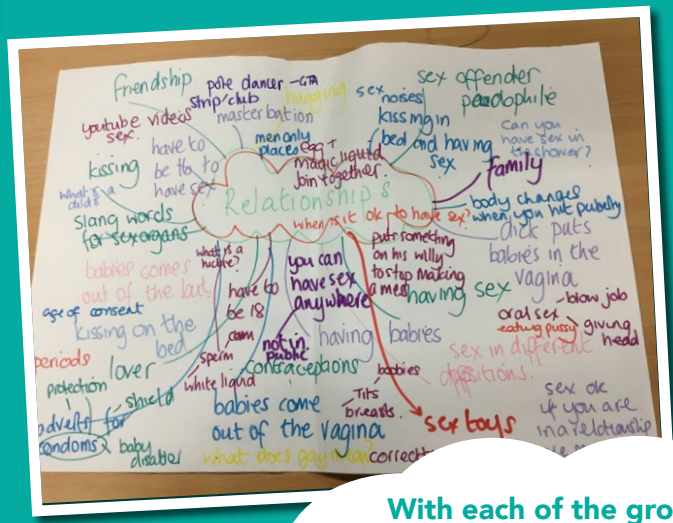
With each of the classes we did an activity called **Celebrate being you.** Young people filled in 'proud clouds' about themselves and what makes people similar and different from each other.



With the key stage three group we also created **finger print trees** to explore ways that we are all similar (we all have a fingerprint) and different (every fingerprint is unique).

Mapping what we know

With each of the groups we wanted to find out what they already knew about key thematic areas in RSE including family, relationships, sexuality and equality. With each group we created a mindmap for each theme and wrote down everything that young people said they knew about .



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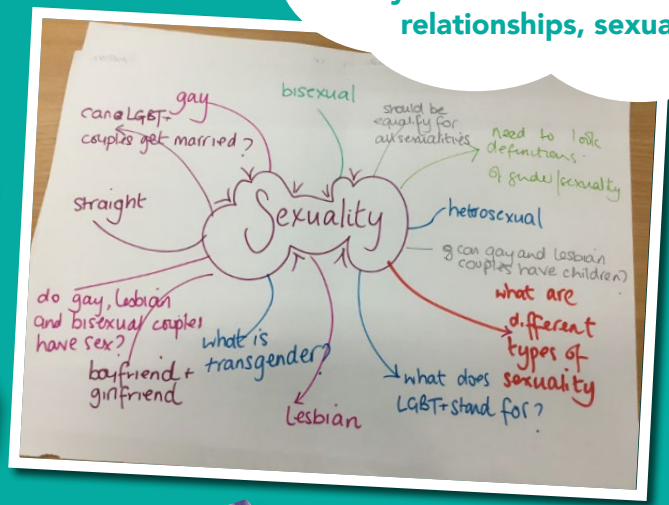
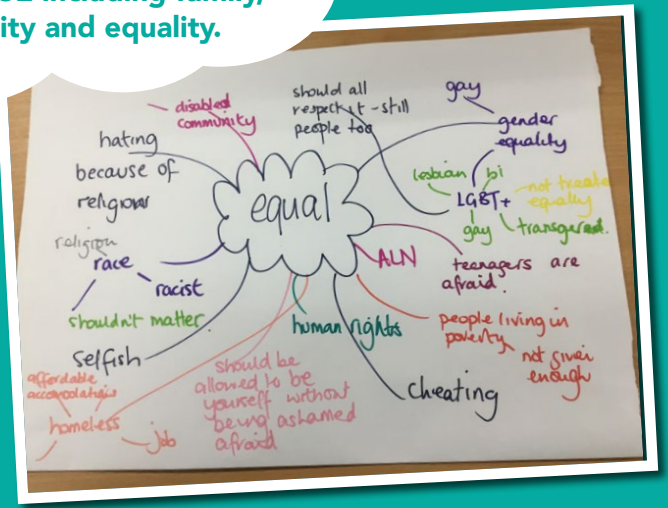
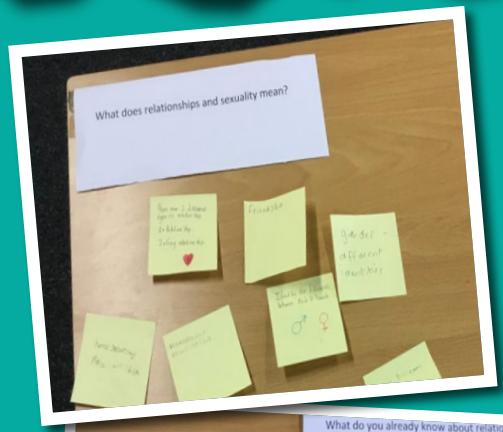
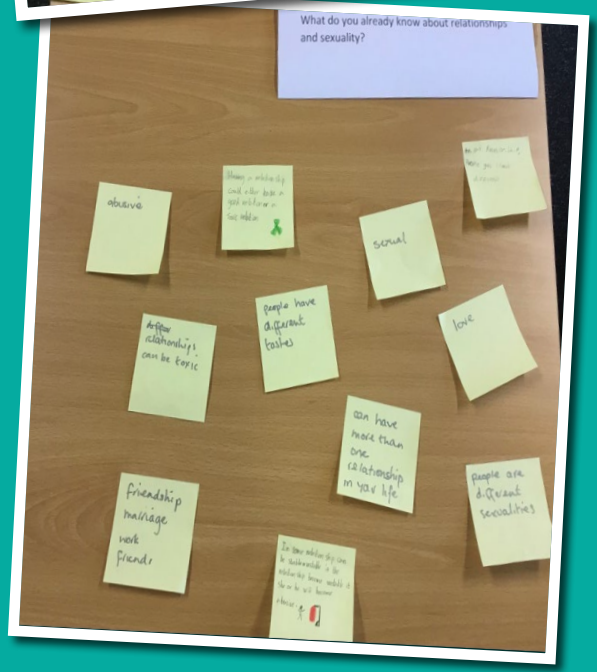




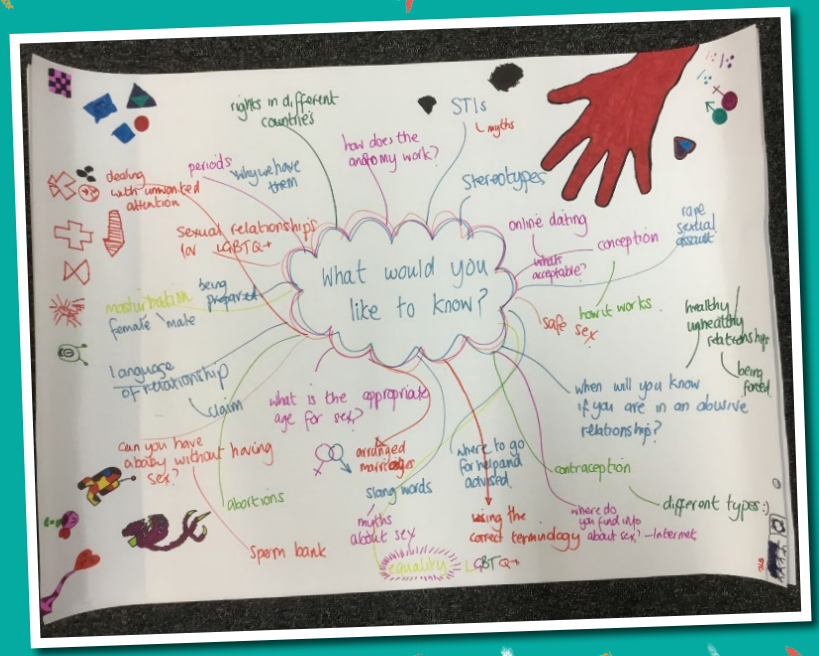




With the post 16 higher ability class we did a **key questions** activity where we asked pupils *'what does relationships and sexuality mean?'* and *'what do you already know about relationships and sexuality?'* Young people wrote their answers on post-it notes or a member of staff scribed for them.

Mapping what we want to know

With the post 16 higher ability class we also asked what would you like to know in RSE?. Young people came up with a wide range of questions such as *'Can you have a baby without having sex?', 'what is the appropriate age for sex?', 'when will you know if you are in an abusive relationships?' 'how does the anatomy work?* . They also wanted to know about *'rights in different countries', 'sexual relationships for LGBTQ+' , 'arranged marriages', 'stereotypes'* and *'online dating'*.



Exploring RSE further

With the post 16 higher ability class we were also able to do some additional creative activities. We used the **CRUSH cards** from the professional learning workshops. I asked young people to work in small groups and group together the cards into categories of their choice. They did this three times, creating new categories each time. At the end of the task they selected some cards to turn over and we read out the stories on the back.

We also did the ***STOP START plates*** activity where we asked young people to write on red and green plates what they wanted to STOP and START about RSE in our school.

STOP stereotyping people

STOP avoiding questions

STOP giving confusing messages

STOP treating us like kids

STOP bullying

STOP bullying because of the way they look

STOP bullying people who are different

STOP trying to ask people if they want to learn sex education

START making the lessons more engaging

START targeting the lessons towards our age group

START saying it as it is

START treating us like adults

START giving single messages

START to treat people the same

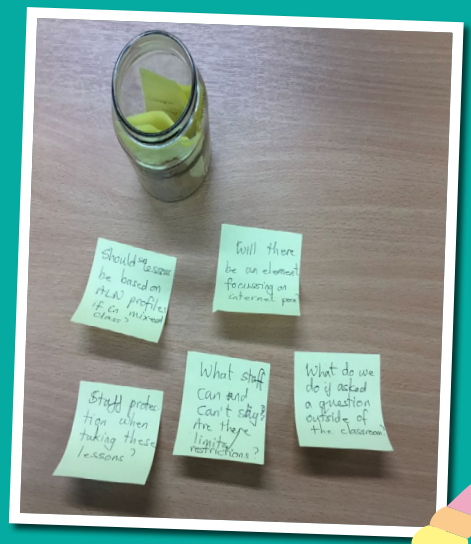
START giving us clear information

START listening to learners in lessons

START adding more information on each subject we learn

Learning through listening (to young people)

From doing the creative audit I learnt that the creative approach really works! I also learnt that we should never assume what learners know, what they want to know or what's going on for them when it comes to relationships and sexuality. I was surprised by the knowledge shown by young people but I was also concerned by the misinformation and misunderstandings that they had. There were lots of misconceptions regarding the age of consent and they had limited knowledge of the correct terminology for parts of the body. There were also misconceptions and prejudices about 'what is normal?' when it comes to relationships and sexuality as well as lots of questions and worries about their own sexualities. I can see that it is so important to develop a curriculum that reflects society today.



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Working with staff

After completing the audit with young people I conducted a creative audit with all members of staff. There are 40 of us in total. We did many of the same activities as the pupils as well as the *'what jars you?'* activity. Here I gave each member of staff a jar and asked them to fill it with all their worries and concerns about RSE. We did the ***Wyred bodies*** activity, the key questions, the CRUSH cards and adapted the ***STOP / START plate*** activity where I asked staff to write on the red plates what RSE is *not* and on the green plates what RSE *is*, or what it *can be*.

I asked staff to write on the red plates what RSE is not and on the green plates what RSE is, or what it can be.

RSE is not:

Prescriptive
Discriminatory
A joke
Sugar-coated
Rigid
Assuming knowledge
Taught to all age groups
Linked to personal experience / preference
Patchy, vague and not consistent
Taboo
Stereotyped
Biased
Not talked about
Just about sex
Exclusion of all

RSE is:

Taught frequently
Accessible to all
Honest
Open minded
Enjoyable
Pupil voice
Body changes / puberty
Flexible
Broad
Engaging / enjoyable / made fun
Should be friendly for everyone to understand and take part
Taught according to developmental level
Scientific
Social appropriateness
Legal
Updated
Understanding of slang
Non-biased
Neutral opinions
Differentiated
Unbiased

Relevant
Issues / concerns discussed with parents
Multicultural
Factual
Visual
Celebration
Other agency
Social stories
Sensory
Relationships
Open platform
Pupil voice
Parental support
Flexible
Individual need
Realistic
Open
Informative
Diverse to include all sexualities
Use correct terminology
Sensitive

Learning through listening (to staff)

It is clear from our whole school staff audit that staff need support, reassurance and professional development if they are to deliver the new RSE curriculum. In the jars there were a lot of concerns about *'saying the right thing'* and about not having up-to-date subject knowledge. Staff worried that they didn't know the correct terminology and that they weren't sure how best to respond to learners' questions or how to differentiate according to learners' wide ranging learning needs. Many staff had limited or no experience of teaching RSE, some worried that it might be embarrassing and others worried about the legalities around teaching RSE. There is an appetite for change however. Looking at the STOP / START plates shows that staff are committed to the idea that we need a modern RSE curriculum for our school that reflects and engages with today's society and that meets the varied needs of our learners.

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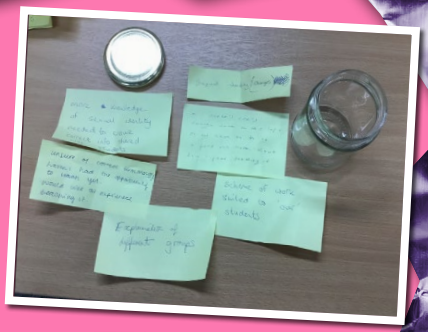
DARTA What jars teachers in a special school about teaching RSE in their school?

- More knowledge of sexual identity needed to ensure correct info is shared with students
- Should lessons be based on ALN profiles if in mixed class?
- Not to be judgemental
- Inexperience / no knowledge of the current RSE
- What images are appropriate? Who approves to content? Who quality assures this?
- Social stories for sexual appropriateness



Embedding a creative and cross-curricular approach to RSE

After finishing the creative audits I completed an audit of our current scheme of work. I wanted to ensure that all the content was up-to-date but also that it included a range of creative activities for teaching of RSE. I've added in lots of the activities that we did in the professional learning programme.

I am working with our curriculum development groups to ensure cross curricular opportunities for teaching RSE are identified and included in the new school curriculum. This is now happening across all AOLEs and teachers are beginning to feel more confident in identifying opportunities for teaching RSE in their everyday teaching. We want to ensure that RSE is not a stand-alone subject and that everyone knows that RSE is every teachers' responsibility. We are learning that this embedded, holistic and cross-curricular approach is not only possible, but that it helps us to ensure that our RSE activities are appropriate for the ability and developmental needs of our learners. Moving forward this cross-curricular approach will be vital for embedding positive approaches and attitudes to RSE.

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RE-MAKING

Starting out

After taking part in the RSE professional learning workshops, I decided to start straight away. At the time we were having a big push on wellbeing anyway due to the covid-19 pandemic. We are a very diverse school and we have learners with a lot of well-being needs, so well-being is a high priority for us.

School

Primary school.

Creative audit participants

13 staff, 90 pupils.

Creative audit activities

Wyred bodies; What Jars you; Crush card images (observe, wonder, infer (OWI); Stop-Start plates; Diversity Street

Making RSE Matter

Relationship webs; Re-visiting diversity street; Junk model bodies; Storying puberty; Period products enquiry; "What Makes a Baby" sculptures with play-doh; Rainbow of Emotions.

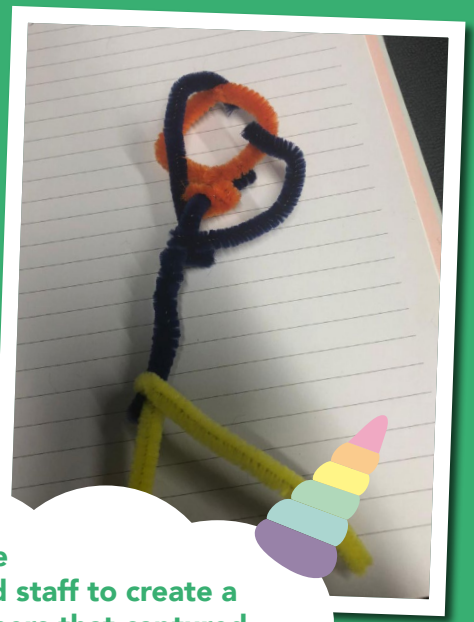
My creative audit

Working with staff: building confidence

I decided to begin with the upper school (years 5 and 6) but before I conducted the creative audit with the pupils, I ran a staff audit. The head, the deputy head and the year 5 and 6 teachers were there, as well as another teacher from our health and well-being AOLE. I also wanted the TA's to be involved – we have two ELSA trained TAs and a nurture TA – so they were part of the team too.

'TOP TIP Start at the top! Aim to present to SLT and then through teams. If SLT are on board then life is easier. Remind SLT that this will be statutory next year so it's vital to start somewhere!'

I had to do the audit virtually because of the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and I had an hour to pack everything in. We started with the ***Wyred Bodies*** activity where I asked staff to create a body out of pipe cleaners that captured how they were feeling about RSE and being part of the staff audit. Staff enjoyed this and came up with some interesting designs! Then we did the ***What jars you?*** which helped explore what staff were feeling about the new RSE curriculum. There was a lot of uncertainty about definitions and their abilities to explain things using terminology that they were not very comfortable with. There were questions such as – *Do we have to answer every/any question? How much detail do we go into*? And other things like dealing with misconceptions and disclosures. Since then, we have had quite a lot of safeguarding training to help staff feel confident managing disclosures.



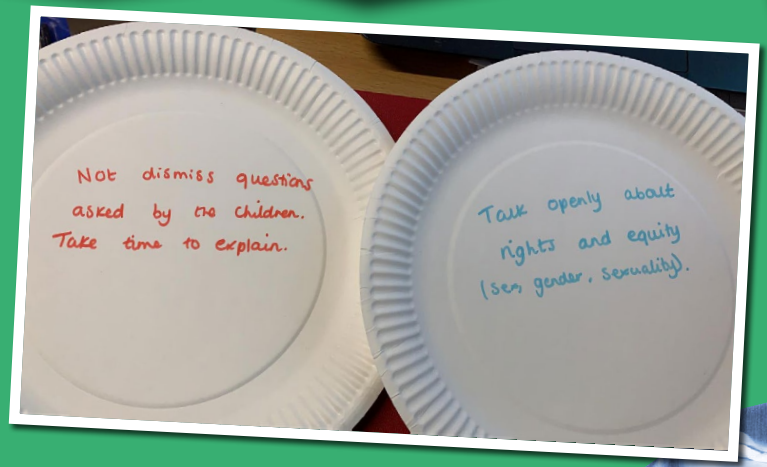
We started with the activity where I asked staff to create a body out of pipe cleaners that captured how they were feeling RSE and being part of the staff audit.

O W I

OBSERVE WONDER INFER

We then moved on to discuss and categorise the CRUSH card images as we had done in the professional learning workshops. They categorised them in all kinds of different ways from gender stereotypes to well-being. We also did an OWI activity with the CRUSH cards, which is something that I use with the children. This is a Philosophy for Children (P4C) activity where you look at an image and you Observe, Wonder and Infer. I asked them to pick one of the images and use the OWI to imagine what the story was about, before turning it over and reading the case study on the back. They were quite surprised to see what the case study actually said. It just kind of showed that we sometimes have our own misconceptions. We put something in our head and stereotype it and that's that. It's quite surprising to find that something is the opposite or different to what you might feel or think that you know.

I finished the staff audit with the ***STOP / START plates*** where I asked them to say what they wanted to STOP and START about RSE. Overall, staff did enjoy the activities and they were happy to share. As a result, when we did the STOP / START activity they came out with a lot of green plates and were clear about the positive changes they wanted to make. Importantly, the head teacher was definitely on board and was keen for us to get going with making changes to RSE provision in our school. She wrote *'START to ensure all children have confident RSE provision.'*



Working with parents: sharing our approach

Before we undertook the creative audit we shared with parents what the audit would involve and took steps to gain their consent (SRE is still not statutory so we are required to do this until the new curriculum is in place). We wrote to parents explaining that we would be looking at all six of the new RSE themes and also gave them the opportunity to come to the school gate to ask any questions and clarify any misconceptions. For the few who had reservations, I was able to explain to them that this was a child-led creative audit where learners were invited to participate and share their views. This reassured most parents but there were still 8 families across the year groups who didn't allow their children to participate. Until RSE becomes statutory, we will continue to share with parents what we do and how, so that all children are able to participate in the responsive and holistic way in which we are now approaching RSE.

I had hoped to carry out a creative audit with parents but Covid-19 restrictions have made this difficult

Working with children: our creative audit week!

Our creative audit with children took place over one week. We worked with about 90 children from years 5 and 6 using literacy lesson time. Each class teacher ran the creative audit with their own class. They had all taken part in the staff audit so were familiar with the new approach to RSE. I created a list of activities that we could do and what we wanted to achieve from them but the conversations in each class were led by the children so each class went in a slightly different direction and staff adapted the activities as they went along.

What we learned from the creative audit was that children feel safe and secure in the school environment. We were quite overwhelmed with how the children responded. We thought it might take them some time to open up, but straight away they were into these discussions and were happy to come and happy to talk. We produced some wonderful darta.

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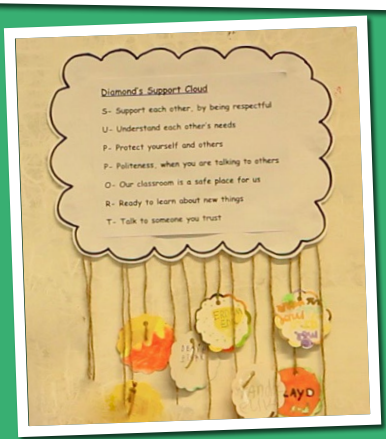
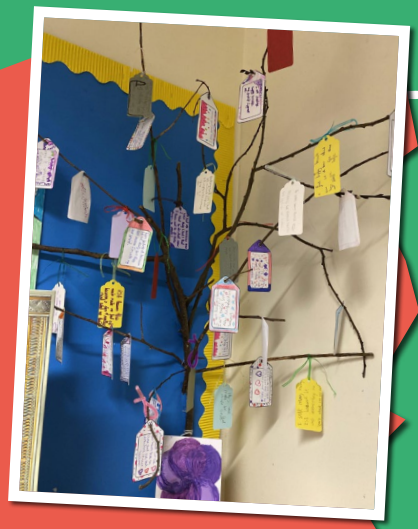
Support clouds

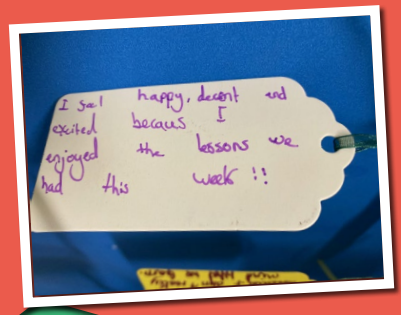
We began with a support cloud lesson. We already have quite a lot of support systems in class, in school. We have a 'helping hands' activity where children identify five people that they can talk to and they know who to turn to if there's any difficulty. This can be other children or members of staff. There's also a poster on display in every class that says *'It's ok to have a wobble'*. We are very open and honest with our children and they know that if they ever have a worry or a wobble they can come back from it and they can have discussions. So when it came to the support clouds, this was comfortable and familiar for them. They loved doing them and they created beautiful ones.



Feelings tree

Inspired by the RSE Trees in the CRUSH resource case study, *Shaking Things Up*, we set up a feelings tree in every classroom. Every day children can add to it to say how they feel or if they have anything to say. They can go and access pipe cleaners and mould them into how they are feeling or get a tag and add that to the tree.



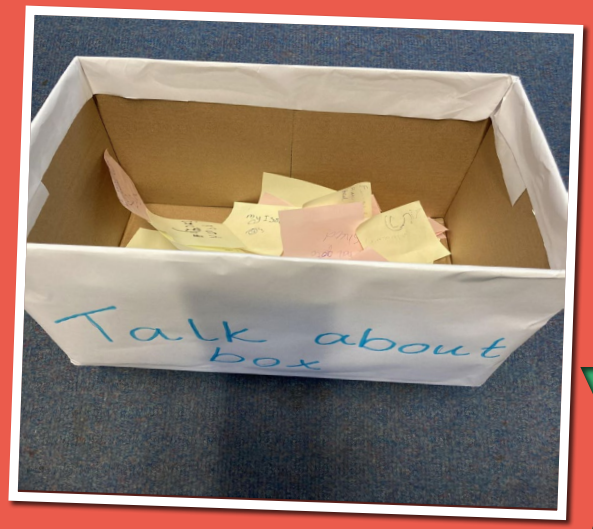


We introduced these during the creative audit week but have left them in the classrooms as a visual legacy of how feelings matter. We are finding that it can be an opening of a conversation between a pupil and a teacher.

The talk-about-box

As part of the audit we put a 'talk-about-box' in every classroom. This is a box that children can use to put their worries, feelings or questions in or to identify an adult they would like to speak to. We called it a 'talk-about-box' so that the children who are new to the English language or those who might not be able to write down what they are feeling, can still use the box as an opportunity to ask for help or to start a conversation.

As part of the creative audit we introduced a talk-about-box to every class. The children used them every day during the creative audit week and the children have carried on using them since. It's just there in the class and there are post-its on our desks. The children can come and get a post it note and add to it whenever they want to. I check them once a week or sometimes more frequently when the children come up and tell me that they've added something.



Just the other day one boy posted about how much he is missing his mum, who he can't see at the moment, which helped us to reach out to him and offer him some support. Another girl told us that she was getting unwanted messages from someone in the class. The message was anonymous so even though I knew who had written it, I decided to talk to the whole class about the issue in general terms, exploring issues of consent and relationships.

Wyred bodies and worry dolls

The children worked with pipe cleaners to make **wyred bodies** to show how they were feeling. They put the bodies in a box and then took someone else's wyred body out of the box. The children tried to guess what each others' bodies were feeling and talk about why they might be feeling that way. They captured their thoughts on coloured tags. We used this activity to talk about good and bad feelings and explore how our bodies react when we are feeling different emotions.

Some of the classes created worry dolls and mapped out their worries and other feelings across the body. At the end of the day they wanted to take the worry dolls home to put them under their pillow or to hold them and talk to them.

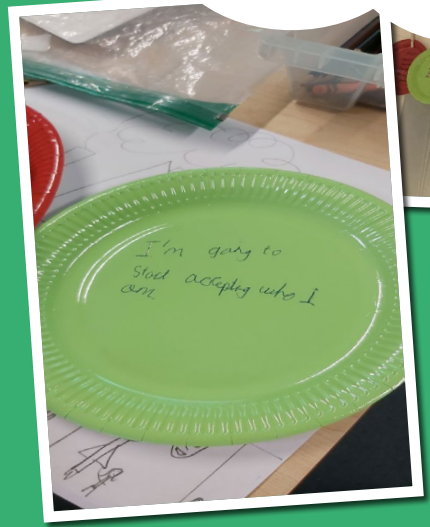
Some of the classes created worry dolls and mapped out their worries and other feelings across the body.

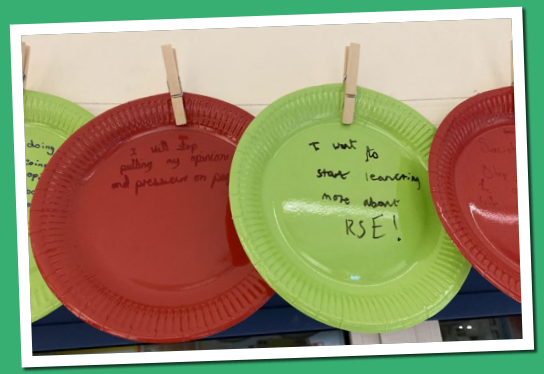
DIVERSITY STREET

Adapting an activity from another teacher in a previous cohort of the PLP, we introduced the children to an activity called Diversity Street by imagining all the different people that could live in a diverse street.

I have a class who are from so many different places and as an introduction I got them to tell everyone else where they are from and what languages they speak. Then I asked them to each draw a house and think about who lived there. They really took it all on board and were thinking about all the different types of families and relationships. They were very aware and accepting of differences. We stuck all of the pictures from the different classes together to create one long 'diversity street' which we have displayed down the hallways and corridors. It looks beautiful.

The stop start plates activity really brought home the idea that the children were really ready to talk about this stuff and wanted "to start learning more about RSE". I felt how they felt empowered by the process.



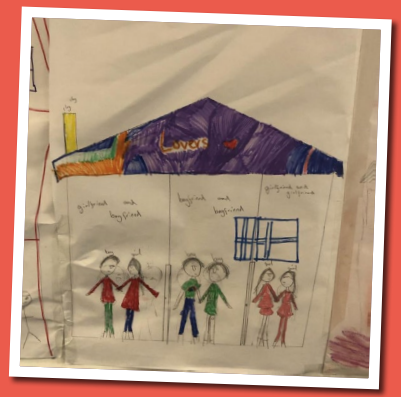


STOP / START plates

The children came out with some amazing STOP / START plates. Even at the new to-english level children were able to respond by drawing or providing some words about how they were going to move forward. Themes that emerged included looking after and being respectful to each other. The theme of equity came out too – children talked about knowing that we were the kind of school that is very accepting because we have children from all walks of life and how they wanted to take that further in their learning.

The ***stop start plates*** activity really brought home the idea that the children were really ready to talk about this stuff and wanted "to start learning more about RSE". I felt how they felt empowered by the process.

Responding to what matters



During the creative audit week we did the same activities with each of the four classes but they responded differently. Two classes in particular really got stuck into the discussions about gender and sexuality at length. They were very keen on talking about what different identities mean, being inquisitive about what they are and how they are celebrated and then talking about the Pride festival. Children in another class were most interested in the theme of gender equality and in my class, the new to English class, children talked about bodies and body image at length. What we and the children were realising and learning was just how important it is for pupils to share their views.

The darta that we collected in our Creative Audit Week showed that our children really took on board the whole diversity and equity aspects of RSE. There were so many positive comments about the lessons from the children, and I think through the grapevine the other children who weren't allowed to join felt a little bit disappointed that they couldn't share their views.

Everything that we've done is amazing and I'd love to revisit the activities everyday. It's just time restraints that stop us from doing that.

RSE is changing: building a more holistic curriculum

After we returned to school after lockdown the school was sent a set of books, ***Iechyd da***, that covered a range of health and wellbeing topics. We looked at the books and planned two weeks of RSE / English lessons around them. Each class teacher choose different books that we thought would best suit our classes and used them to explore different RSE themes and in ways that responded to the children's questions, views and interests from the creative audit darta

A lot of the stories focussed on the theme of change. At this point in year 6 there's a lot of changes going on – there's the forthcoming transition to high school, we are in and out of lockdown, and bodily changes are starting to happen.

In my class we looked at *Keffin y Coala Carcus*. We wrote stories and explored feelings and wrote about ourselves to promote the qualities and strengths that we have. We read another story called *The New Girl* and so many themes came out of our discussions – acceptance, equality, equity, everything! As we explored this book we made origami. The book is about a girl from Japan and about being left out and being different. She creates these origami flowers to intrigue the other children and they become friends. In our class we created origami flowers and then they wrote the instructions on how to create the flowers and then we wrote our own stories.

When we did the review of the year's work, they had forgotten about the book and the story, but they remembered the origami!

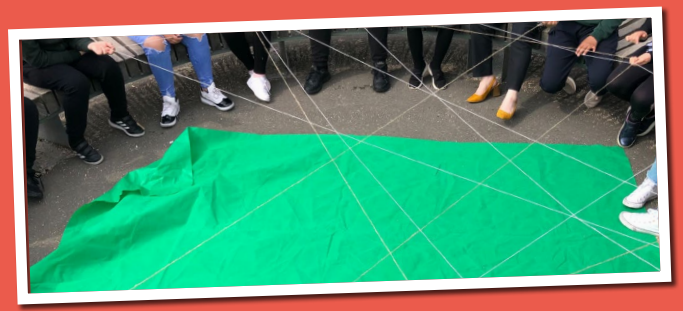
Transforming RSE week

A few months after the creative audit I was doing a recap on the changes to the curriculum across all areas of learning. All the activities that they remembered across the curriculum were the creative and the practical ones. So they remembered making origami flowers and creating support clouds. This is what they enjoy and it really helps them to open up.

The lightbulb moment for me came after the creative audit when I was thinking about our summer RSE week. Every year we design a week of RSE lessons focussing on relationships and puberty. I was thinking about it with dread. And then I had that moment where I was like – 'oh – why can't I do it that way, via the new RSE approach'. So I decided to transform our RSE week – not by changing content so much (although we did ask again what children wanted to learn about) but by changing our approach. By becoming more creative with our teaching and learning, you move away from spoon feeding the children information. It's much more child led. As a teacher this means you have to adapt as you go.

Re-visiting our feelings and making more support clouds

This year we started by returning to some of the things we had made during the creative audit week. We returned to our feelings tree. We talked again about how to take care of our feelings and the feelings of others over time. We re-made our wyred bodies, created more support clouds and added them all to our feelings tree. We talked about how to look after our feelings tree and one boy imagined the tree coming to life: "If we add more feelings it might bring it to life".



Making relationship webs

We then explored the role of feelings in relationships by adapting **AGENDA's relationship webs activity**. First, we went outside into the playground and created a large web by throwing a ball of string to someone who had something in common with them. At the end of this session we had made a large, tangled relationships web which helped us to explore similarities and differences in the group.

When we got back to the classroom we started thinking about what's important to us in a relationship. Every child then created their own relationships web by writing down all the ingredients of what makes a healthy relationship for them. Making time for children to colour in their webs also gave us all time to talk more about our feelings and views about what 'trust', 'respect', 'happiness' meant to each other.

Diverse Relationships and Rainbows of Emotions

We returned to our Diversity Street. I invited the children to see how many different kinds of relationships they could spot. We used the children's responses to explore sameness, difference and belonging. During the week we returned again to the Diversity Street to spot different emotions and feelings in the images children had created.

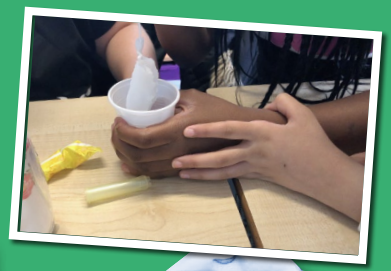
I rolled out a large rainbow and scattered a range of emotions for the children to pick up and read and some blank pieces of paper to add their own (e.g. happy, scared, excited, astonished, embarrassed, confused etc.) Each child then placed an emotion on a colour in the rainbow, and we began talking about how we manage and regulate our emotions, during puberty and over the life course.

Making bodies, body parts and babies

We used recycled materials to make junk model bodies in small groups. We returned to these bodies again and again, thinking about what different body parts they could have and how they might need to be taken care of. We learnt about reproduction and menstruation in new and creative ways, making and learning as we go.

We used recycled materials to make junk model bodies in small groups. We returned to these bodies again and again, thinking about what different body parts they could have and how they might need to be taken care of.

Children created their own stories from some of the crush card images, which enabled a wider discussion about what they were already learning and experiencing around puberty in the context of their own peer cultures. We undertook a science enquiry project in small groups on the absorbency of different period products. They dipped different products in water and we talked about what happens when bodies menstruate.



To support our understanding of reproduction, we looked at *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg and then asked the children to make a character or element from the story using playdoh. They created all kinds of things – a sperm, a foetus, a baby. And as they were making and sharing their sculptures we could find out what they already knew and didn't know and what more they wanted to know.

These creative and hands-on activities were fun, and created a lively atmosphere. They allowed us to work with any feelings of embarrassment that children expressed by returning to our junk bodies, the feelings tree, our support clouds and our diversity street.

At the end of the week the children made a junk body to reflect upon how they felt about the sessions. They ended up creating me, their teacher! Their sticky notes will stay with me, reminding me just how important it is to find creative ways to normalise how we learn about RSE in school:

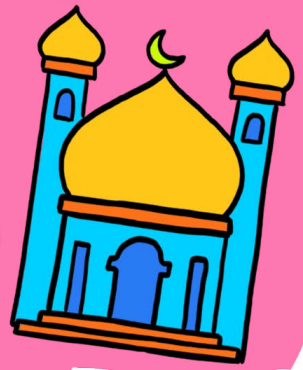
"I feel good", "I feel joy", "I feel normal" "I feel happy" "i feel interested because we learned so many things in the last few days. I loved it".

Moving forward

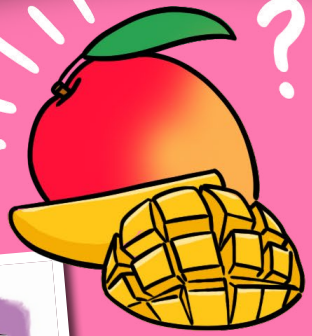
We used to teach RSE at the end of the summer term and approach RSE using very formal methods of teaching. We now look at RSE almost like a fluid, ever changing, adapting conversation with our children, which we can add to and adapt as and when the need arises with the pupils. And the creative sessions give pupils an opportunity to express themselves in different ways. They can show us a lot of what they are thinking through different modes of learning and what they have understood and we can learn *with them* to progress our learning further.

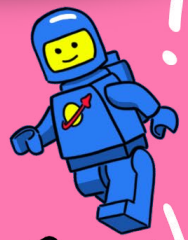
Section 5

Starting Out with the RSE Code



RELATIONSHIPS AND IDENTITY





What's in the RSE Code?

"This strand focuses on:

- the range of relationships that human beings have throughout their lives
- how identity can be shaped by our relationships and sexuality
- the importance of human rights in securing healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships in an inclusive society"

Learners need to develop the understanding and behaviours that will support them to develop and maintain healthy, safe and fulfilling relationships throughout their lives. Learners need to be supported to recognise and value different types of relationships, including families and friendships, as well as the diversity within different types of relationships, including LGBTQ+ diversity, and that these can change over time. Developing empathy, compassion and communication skills are critical to learners' relationships now and the relationships they will form in the future. This will also support respect, understanding and equitable treatment for others, whatever their sex, gender, sexuality, faith or belief.

Learners also need to develop both their sense of self and their sense of everyone being unique. Over time, learners can explore how relationships, sex, gender, romantic and sexual attraction and personal experiences may shape and inform a person's identity and individuality. This supports learners to understand how identity, relationships and sexuality are informed by biology, technology and social, cultural and religious norms and that these may change over time. By engaging with these aspects, learners can recognise both positive and harmful behaviours and norms and have the confidence to speak up for themselves and to speak out and advocate for the rights and respect of others.

This strand also recognises how rights can support and underpin equitable, respectful relationships, as well as a fair and inclusive society.

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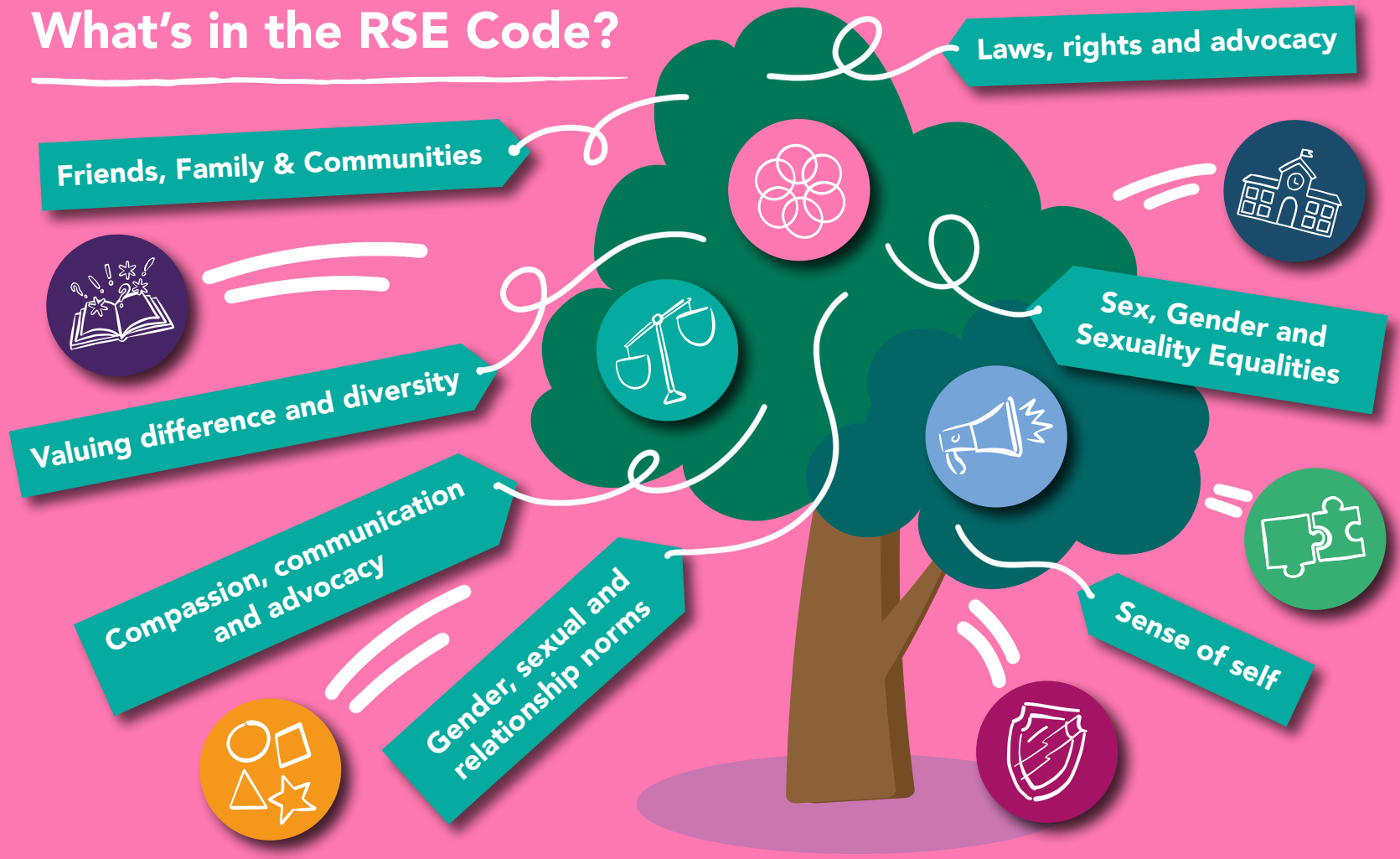
What's in the RSE Code?



Relationships and Identity Strand Mandatory Content

Phase 1 (from age 3)	**Phase 2** (from age 7)	**Phase 3** (from age 11)
Kindness, empathy and compassion in interactions with others immediate to them including family, friendship and peer relationships.	Ability to form and maintain relationships which are equitable, respectful and kind with a range of others.	Understanding the positive and negative characteristics and healthy or unhealthy aspects of a range of relationships including family, friendship, romantic and sexual. Ability to develop and understand the importance of equity, mutual respect, and affection in relationships with others.
An awareness of how to communicate wants and needs in relationships, and begin to respect those of others. Awareness of how needs relate to rights.	How understanding and use of effective communication, decision-making, managing conflict and refusal skills are part of ensuring your own and others rights and part of friendships and relationships.	Understanding and use of effective communication, decision making, managing and resolving conflict, and refusal skills in a range of different contexts and types of relationships, offline and online, including intimate relationships. Understanding how to speak out about harmful behaviours directed at them or others.

Relationships and Identity Strand Mandatory Content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)	Phase 2 (from age 7)	Phase 3 (from age 11)
Awareness of the diversity of families and relationships, including friendship and peer relationships, and why these are important.	Recognition of the characteristics of different families, friendship and peer relationships and the diversity of these. Understanding positive behaviours in relationships and what can happen when relationships breakdown. An awareness of how families, relationships and parenting are shaped by social and cultural norms and laws that have changed over time.	Understanding how the diversity of relationships including marriage, and all types of civil partnership, has changed over time, and how relationships are positively and negatively impacted by social and cultural norms and laws in different ways around the world.
Developing a sense of themselves, in the context of families, friends and communities. Recognising how people value different things and have different families, friends and communities.	Recognising how people's relationships with others shape who they are and their happiness. An awareness of how identity can be expressed in different ways.	Understanding how rights need to be balanced in a diverse society; the characteristics, benefits and challenges of living in a diverse society; and how and why attitudes have changed and are changing including towards gender and sexuality diversity.

Relationships and Identity Strand Mandatory Content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)

Experiencing inclusive behaviours, language and role modelling that show respect for others, whatever their gender.

Recognising learners' rights to be treated fairly, kindly and with respect.

Phase 2 (from age 7)

Valuing and recognising the contributions of everyone; and the importance of sex and gender equality.

Recognise and know how to safely respond to and challenge gender and sexual stereotypes and unfair behaviour.

An awareness of how positive and negative social and cultural norms regarding sex, gender and sexuality influence relationships and behaviours.

Phase 3 (from age 11)

An ability to advocate for and advance the rights of all and understand and respect all people in relation to sex, gender and sexuality.

Understanding how the law and human rights secure freedoms around sex, gender and sexuality and how these can differ in other countries and over time.

Ability to critically explore and understand how a range of social, cultural and religious norms and influences about relationships, sex, gender and sexuality can shape perceptions and our wellbeing and can be both positive and harmful.

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View the full RSE code **here**

How are children and young people living and learning about relationships and identities?

Closing the gap

There is a big gap between children and young people's lived experiences and the RSE they experience in school. Research shows that RSE often fails to address children and young people's questions and concerns and that many children struggle to find themselves and their experiences reflected in the RSE curriculum.

To address this gap we created the ***CRUSH CARDS*** to use with teachers in our professional learning programme. They can also be adapted by teachers for use with children and young people.

Each card contains a bold image on one side and a case study on the back. Each case study or quote is drawn from research with children and young people and offers a snapshot of their lives.

All of the stories and images on the next few pages relate to the theme of **Relationships and Identity.**

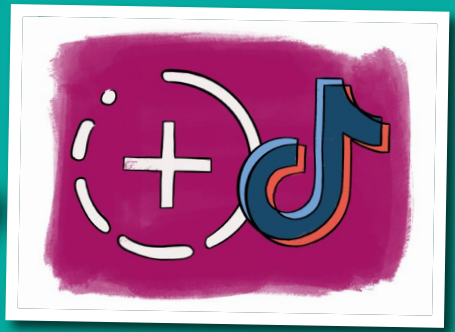
Choose one of the stories on this page to read and:

Ask: Are you surprised when you turn over the card?

Consider: What norms or expectations are over-turned when you explore what or how young people are learning about RSE?

Reflect: How do you feel about what you have read? What more do you want to know?

For more ideas about how to use the CRUSH cards in professional learning workshops see the ***StARTing Out*** case studies in this resource.



Nia and Ally (age 15) talk about "what we've learnt about relationships" in school. "But it's not really relationships", Ally says, "it's like.... it's extreme, so it's how to recognise, like, emotional abuse and physical abuse, stuff like that. It's not... like, the basics! We've got all the extremes, but none of the basics!".

Ally says: 'I feel like there's so many different sides, I feel like... I feel like during lockdown it was Tik-Tok and stuff like that, which I have found out so much about, like, LGBTQ and feminism and stuff like that, just through social media"

Sasha, Carla and Aisha walk proudly in a line around the nursery in their princess costumes. Their princess line snakes in and out of the different zones; the wendy house, the shop, the red truck, the reading corner. One boy, Tommy, reaches into the dress-up box and slips on a princess dress. He then proceeds to chase the princesses, roaring loudly, "I'm a homo". The girls are all screaming with laughter as they are chased around the nursery floor.'

(age 3-4)

Mia, Isabella, Safa and Imogen (all aged 12) are a newly formed group of Year 7 friends, who call themselves 'The Weirdos!'. The group take part in a number of extra-curricular school activities, giving them a reputation for being 'superstars' by their teacher. With their peers however, being so helpful earns them the derisive title of the 'Sparkle Committee', due to their love of glitter.

Describing themselves as 'weird people through and through', they often assert that there is 'no such thing as a normal person, because every person is different!'. They speak animatedly in favour of gender equality, race equality and LGBT rights, and critique the everyday sexist practices they witness at school around gendered uniform policies and gender segregated P.E lessons.

Dating and talking about crushes is associated with popularity at their school, but they routinely dismiss and trivialise the topic. Safa once sent a YouTube video on 'How to Talk to Your Crush' to 'The Weirdos' WhatsApp group chat but said that she thought it would 'just be really funny just to laugh at!' and whispered 'I don't have crushes'. Nevertheless, they reveal that they asked the Amazon virtual assistant Alexa 'who she had a crush on' and Safa shared how the Apple virtual assistant Siri had told her 'a love story'.

"Mine's called Dave, she's a girl" says Alys, one girl, in a group of Year 6 (age 10-11) girls who call themselves the misfits. They are all drawing avatars to explore the pressures of body image. As they do so, they share experiences of what it feels like to look, move, act and desire in non- normative ways. They talk about supporting each other to "be themselves" in a world that both punishes and celebrates "being different". Alys is particularly vocal about this double-bind.

Alys has "short hair", "loves to wear all things black", and "go out to the forest to climb trees and play with the hay bales and dogs". While most family members encourage her "freedom of expression", there are compromises and judgements. Her "short hair" isn't as short as she would like, "because dad doesn't like it", so she wears it a little longer but "short enough not to have to brush it". She enjoys experimenting with what her body can do. "Sometimes, coz I can contort (my body), when I put my leg over my head my Nan goes, "Start sitting like a lady".

In Year 5 (age 9) Alys "realised" she could "love both sexes". She "came out as bisexual" to her friends, and then to her mum and her family: "I feel like I've made a difference in my family cause I'm first at being in the LGBT plus community. At school, however, her peers are not so accepting. Alys compares how "people used to make fun of my disability" but since coming out as bisexual, it is her sexuality that is now targeted. She talks about being pressured not to 'like' or 'date' one of the girls in their class:

Zofia: yeah. So errm this girl um Maya who used to go out with Alys. Her (friendship) group weren't happy…
Alys: Yeah they weren't very happy about us going out.
Zofia: So me and Megan were trying to tell the girls…just let them do it what they want to do. In the end the popular girls got their way…they got their way and convinced Maya to stop going out with Alys.
Alys: Yeah. But Megan!
Megan: What happened with me?
Alys: You went EEEEEEEEK (shrieks)
Megan: Oh yeah. I screamed when I found out. I, I'm very positive towards, like, girls being with girls.
Alys: She made me this banner.
Megan: yeah I made this banner…I made her a little banner saying what she's like and why she's different and it was just a really colourful rainbow and she really liked it.

I got called strange, by boys in the old school. Me and this girl named Alice used to always hang out ... so in the end ... we made up a lie that we were cousins, and that lasted for like a year before we told anyone. And then to make it even more obvious, when it was her birthday, I'd get like Happy Birthday Cousin, and then I'd give it to her in school.

(Jared, age 11)

Boys will say, "well go out with me or I will hate you" and the girl will get scared and they will go out with them

(Maisy, age 10)

The (playground monitors) go, 'the more the boys hit you and chase you the more they love you'

(Kayley, age 10)

Starting out with relationships and identity

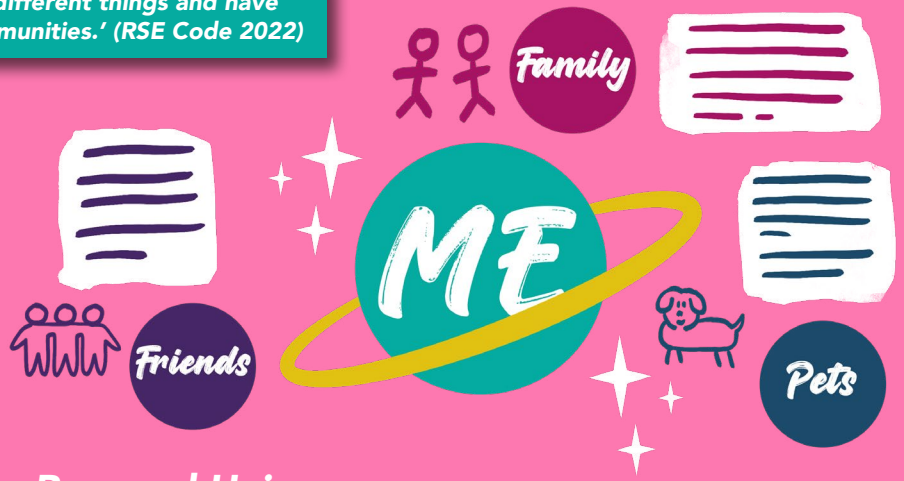
This section shares some of the ways that teachers in Wales are getting started with engaging children and young people with learning about the theme of relationships and identity. All of these teachers have taken part in our intensive RSE professional learning programme.

'Recognising how people value different things and have different families, friends and communities.' (RSE Code 2022)

Relationship Wheels

As a warm up activity, one year 6 teacher created *Relationship wheels* to explore the question 'who is important to me?'. In the central circle the children put the people who were the most important, then in the next circles people who are less important, but still important. Children then talked about their wheels if they wanted to.

"I learnt so much about my kids from doing this. It was really surprising. Some of them who I would have expected to put a father, or another family member, deliberately left them off because they clash with that person, or because they can be violent towards them. It was really valuable. Although it was planned as a warm up activity, I'm actually going to recommend that every teacher does it with their class at the beginning of each year. You get such a good insight into your pupils and what and who is important to them." (Year 6 teacher)



Personal Universes

A secondary school RSE lead hosted a year 9 health and wellbeing day called *Keeping it real*. As part of this, students explored personal relationships. Young people were all given a large sheet of paper and coloured pens and asked to create their own personal universe, showing who and what is important to them in their lives.

"We loved this activity" (RSE lead)

'Developing a sense of themselves, in the context of families, friends and communities.' (RSE Code 2022)

Recognising how people value different things and have different families, friends and communities. (RSE code 2022)

Relationships through Art

One primary school teacher used art to explore relationships and identity with children who have a language impairment in Years 3-6. Children studied Welsh artist Keith Haring to look at different relationships and create a docupage. Next, they conducted additional research to compare Haring and artist Martin Evans to explore lifestyles in the valleys and subways.

'Recognition of the characteristics of different families, friendship and peer relationships and the diversity of these.' (RSE Code 2022)

Diversity Street

One primary teacher developed an activity called Diversity Street to explore relationship diversity with children in Year 6.

She started by introducing the group to the themes of diversity and difference using adverts and film clips. Next, she asked children to imagine the most diverse street in the world. Who would live there? What would their home be like?

Other teachers have adapted the activity with children in Year 1 - Year 6 to explore similarities and differences between families, to celebrate diversity in their community and to explore relationships and emotions.

"I rolled out a long piece of paper and asked the children to design a street that housed as many family and relationship variations as they could think of. They cut out pictures from catalogues and drew their own houses and families to create the sheet and I was amazed by the diverse identities and relationships that they chose to include". (Year 6 teacher)

Awareness of the diversity of families and relationships, including friendship and peer relationships, and why these are important. (RSE code 2022)

A learning walk

Several teachers in primary and secondary schools have invited children to carry out a learning walk around their schools to map what children are learning about relationships and identity and to consider how safe, inclusive, equitable and diverse the school is for its learners. This has involved looking at *WHAT'S ON THE WALLS* around the school (e.g. posters, awards, school-work) and *HOW SCHOOL SPACES SOUND AND FEEL* for children as they move through the school.

Experiencing inclusive behaviours, language and role modelling that show respect for others, whatever their gender. (RSE Code 2022)

Recognising learners' rights to be treated fairly, kindly and with respect. (RSE Code 2022)

Valuing and recognising the contributions of everyone; and the importance of sex and gender equality. (RSE Code 2022)

An ability to advocate for and advance the rights of all and understand and respect all people in relation to sex, gender and sexuality (RSE Code 2022)

CRUSHING harmful gender norms

Several teachers have used the CRUSH card activity to explore gender stereotypes with children and young people in Years 5 - 8.

Young people put themselves into friendship groups and each group is given a set of blank CRUSH card images.

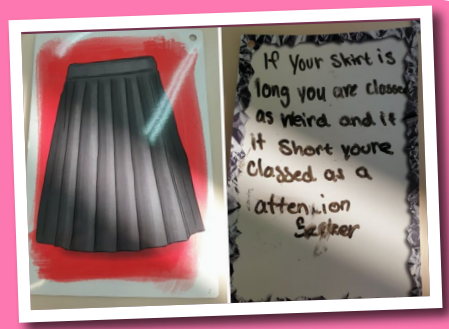
Groups are asked to categorise the cards three times, using different categories each time. Teachers often find that children and young people use the activity to share their feelings about gender norms and gender inequality and discrimination. To explore this further, one secondary teacher asked learners to choose one card that represented something that mattered to them about gender norms and write something on the back of the card. Once everyone had written and shared their statements (if they wanted to) the teacher led a discussion with the class to unpack some of the statements further, such as:

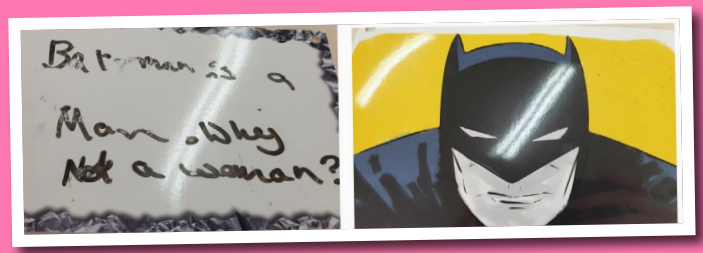
"If you have a boy then they have to learn to play football"

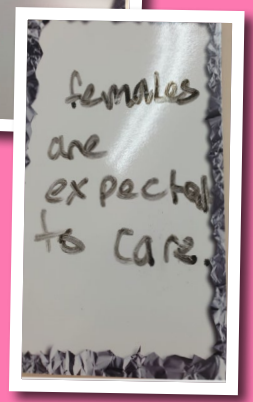
"Computer games are just for boys"

"Boys are really judgy about girls who wear skirts and if you don't wear a skirt then the boys won't like you"

"I asked a lot of 'why questions. Why is that? With computer games, is that down to how the manufacturer is promoting them? Or a wider issue? I often started a question with 'I wonder if…'. This enabled discussion to flow and pupils engaged freely (…). The activity helped us unpick quite a lot and I found it very interesting as they often mentioned things that I did not even consider". (RSE lead, Secondary school)







Recognise and know how to safely respond to and challenge gender and sexual stereotypes and unfair behaviour. (RSE Code 2022)

An awareness of how positive and negative social and cultural norms regarding sex, gender and sexuality influence relationships and behaviours. (RSE Code 2022)

Valuing and recognising the contributions of everyone; and the importance of sex and gender equality. (RSE Code 2022)

Becoming resourceful

To read more about how teachers are getting started with the theme of Relationships and Identity, read one of the CRUSH Starting Out case studies.

All of the case studies explore themes in Relationships and Identity in different ways across primary, secondary and special school settings.

We love RSE: Primary school (Foundation phase)

Inside Out: Primary school (Key stage 2)

In the Mix: Secondary School (Key stage 3)

Hearts and Minds: Secondary School (Key stages 3 and 4)

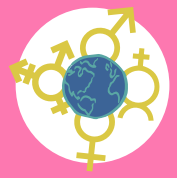
Shaking things up: Secondary School (Key stages 3,4 and 5)

Re-making RSE: Primary school (Key stage 2)

RSE: Canvassing voice: Special school (3-19)

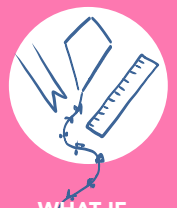
Mapping our RSE: Special School (11-19)

For more ideas on how to get started with this theme, have a look at the following case studies from the resource ***Agenda: supporting children and young people in making positive relationships matter.*** This is a free bilingual resource to help children, young people and educators explore relationships creatively. To find out more about the resource, go to: ***neu.org.uk/agenda***. This includes a recorded 2 hour online professional learning session for teachers.



ALL OF US

Exploring gender and sexual equalities and rights across the cuarriculum, from petitions to philosophy



WHAT IF #THISISME?

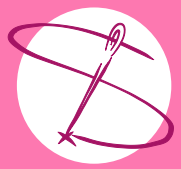
Making gender justice matter with rulers, ribbons and kites

SMASHING COMMERCIAL SEXISM

Challenging commercial sexism with Year 6 students in a lego workshop

GRAND THEFT EQUALITY

A gender equalities research project into sexism and sexual harassment in online gaming



CRAFTING EQUALITY

Stitching our rights to make a safe, fair and more equal world for all

THE ROTIFER PROJECT

Educating staff about gender diversity through a game of gender-snap pairs and a muffin challenge

RECLAIMING RELATIONSHIPS

Transforming materials from a motorbike salvage yard to make a positive relationships sculpture

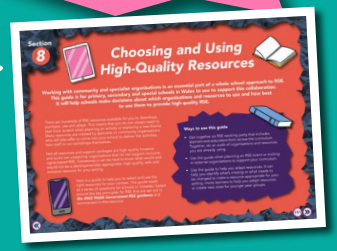
DIGITAL DIVERSITY CLUB

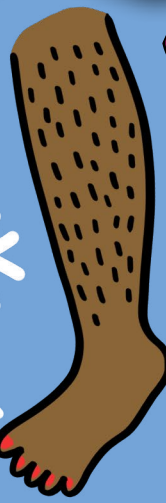
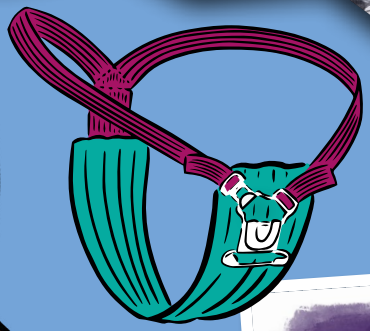
Supporting and celebrating gender and sexual inclusivity in school and online

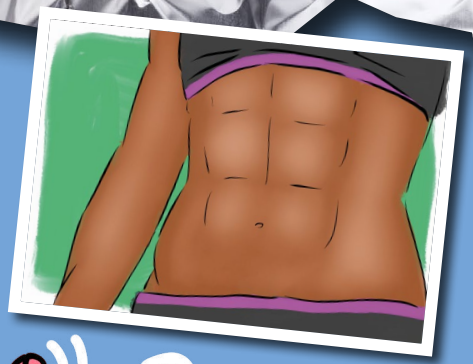
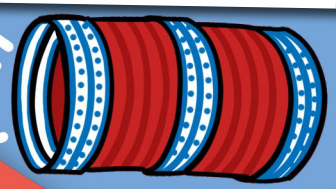
GENDER STEREOTYPES ARE DEBATABLE

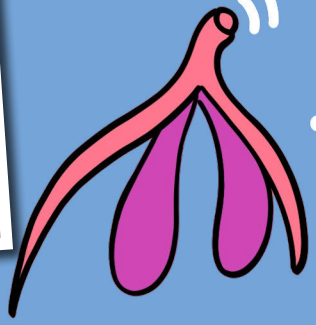
Exploring how gender norms shift and change over time and around the world

There are many organisations and resources that can support you to get started with the theme of Relationships and Identity. To help you assess the quality of any resource you come across, go to the ***Choosing and Using Resources*** section. This section hosts a toolkit that has been developed using the key principles for RSE outlined in the Welsh Government RSE Guidance (2022).

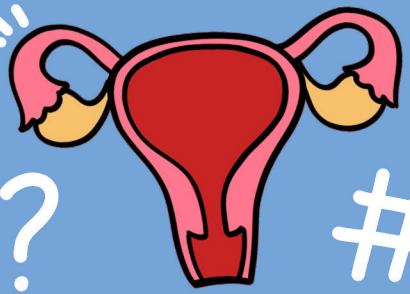
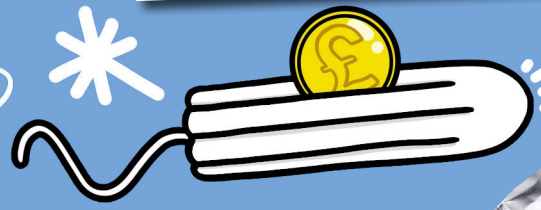




SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

What's in the RSE Code?

This strand focuses on:

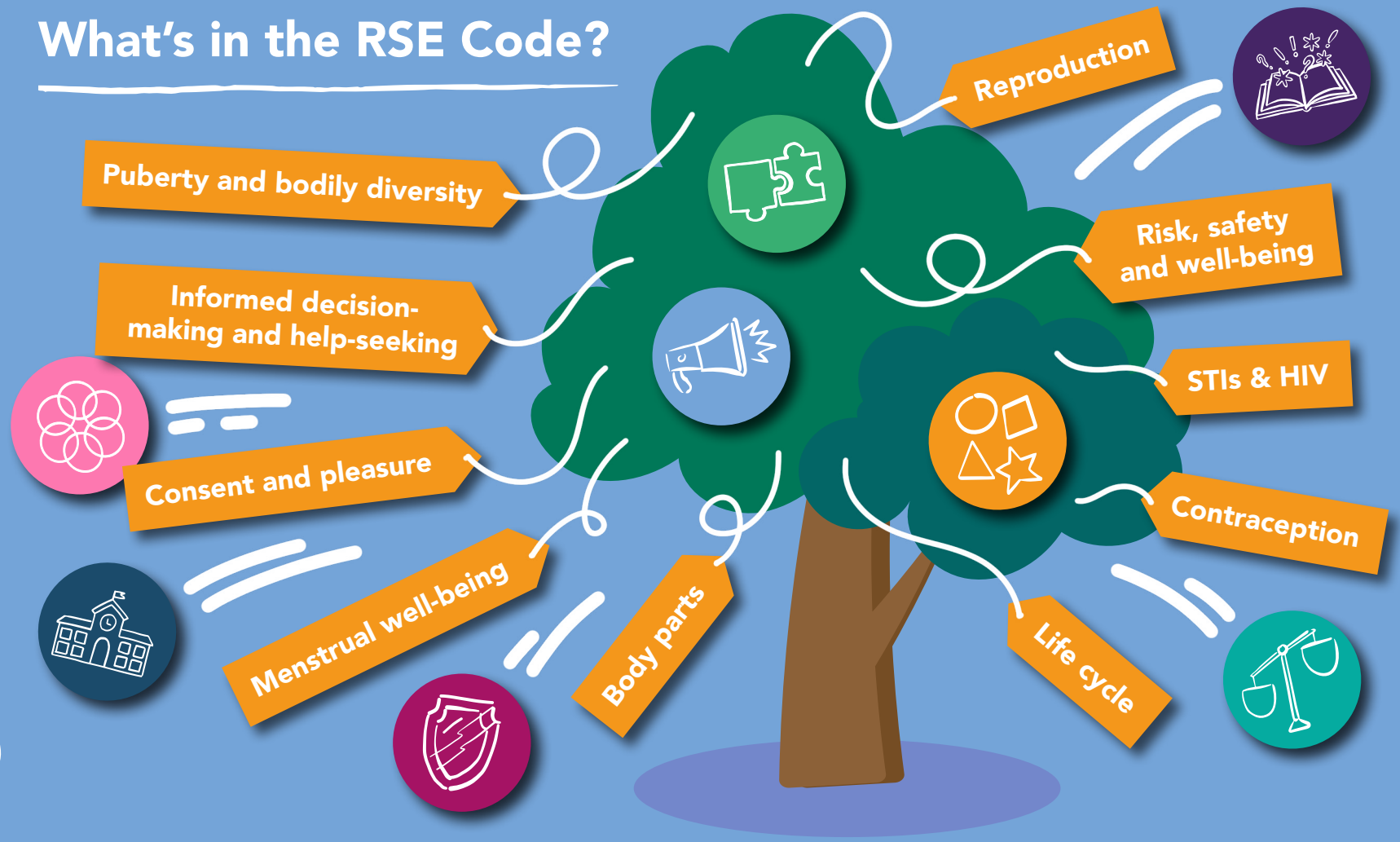
- learning about how living things grow, reproduce and have a life cycle
- developing an understanding of the human body, including people's feelings about their bodies and how these can be represented
- the health issues related to relationships and sexuality
- an understanding of how sexuality and sexual health affects our well-being.

In early development, learners need to experience contexts for understanding the importance of maintaining personal health and well-being, including hygiene, and how this impacts on themselves and others. This progresses to applying broad principles of health and hygiene within sexual health.

As learners develop, teaching and learning needs to include focus on exploring how physical changes have an impact on well-being and relationships ensuring the representation of LGBTQ+ experiences and lives. Learning also focuses on menstrual well-being and conditions which can affect the reproductive system; as well as developing understanding of the possible outcomes of the decisions made relating to sexual health and relationships. All of this learning will focus on recognising the diversity of human body types, how perception and understanding of the human body is shaped by society, the law, science and technology and the impact of this on well-being.

Welsh Government 2022

What's in the RSE Code?



Sexual Health and Wellbeing strand mandatory content

Phase 1 (from age 3)	**Phase 2** (from age 7)	**Phase 3** (from age 11)
The use of accurate terminology for all body parts. An awareness of the human life cycle and that reproduction is a part of life.	Knowledge and understanding of how reproductive organs develop in a human body. This includes understanding fertility and the processes of reproduction, including what supports menstrual health and well-being. Recognising the process of pregnancy and birth.	Understanding how fertility, sexual function and menstrual health and well-being canchange across the life course and how to find information and support when needed. The knowledge and understanding of howhormones continue to affect emotional andphysical health throughout adulthood. Understanding how contraception can assist with reproductive choices, including awareness of abortion.
Awareness of how human bodies change as they grow.	The knowledge and understanding of how people experience significant physical, emotional, social and cognitive changes during puberty.	Understanding of good sexual and reproductive health, including the range of risks and outcomes from sexual experiences and the knowledge needed to support informed decisions about sexual activity and about reproductive choices.

Sexual Health and Wellbeing strand mandatory content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)	Phase 2 (from age 7)	Phase 3 (from age 11)
An awareness of the importance of personal self-care and hygiene.	The knowledge and skills needed to manage personal self-care and hygiene, including the importance of menstrual well-being.	The knowledge and understanding of the causes, symptoms and impact of conditions connected to sexual and reproductive health and to fertility, including sexually transmitted infections, HIV and reproductive cancers. Understanding and skills needed to minimise risks and seek help.
A recognition that everyone's body is unique and special to them.	An awareness that there are many different sources of information offline and online that help us learn about our bodies and affect how we feel about our body and other people's bodies.	Critically engaging with positive and negative representations of a diversity of bodies, including through various forms of media and understanding that these can be unrealistic and harmful.

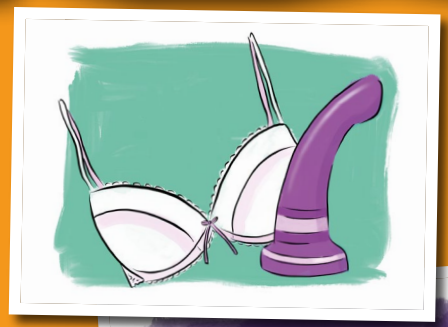
Sexual Health and Wellbeing strand mandatory content (continued)

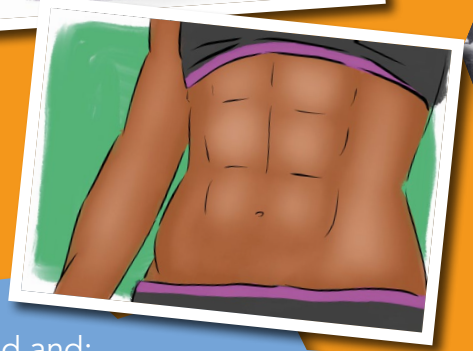
Phase 1 (from age 3)	**Phase 2** (from age 7)	**Phase 3** (from age 11)
Awareness of the different feelings one can have, recognising other people's feelings and how these may differ to your own.	Awareness of how people can feel attracted to others as they mature and how this can lead to emotional and physical responses.	Understanding how all are entitled to safe and pleasurable relationships and recognising the role consensual sexual activity plays within healthy relationships. Understanding the legal age of consent.
Recognising trusted adults who can help them and whom they can talk to and ask questions of, especially when they feel unhappy or unsafe.	Be able to identify trustworthy sources of information and able to raise issues and questions with trusted adults.	Recognise and be able to use a range of support services to access information and support around relationships, health and well-being and safety.

Welsh Government 2022

View the full RSE code **here**

How are children and young people living and learning about sexual health and wellbeing?





Closing the gap

There is a big gap between children and young people's lived experiences and the RSE they experience in school. Research shows that RSE often fails to address children and young people's questions and concerns and that many children struggle to find themselves and their experiences reflected in the RSE curriculum.

To address this gap we created the CRUSH CARDS to use with teachers in our professional learning programme. They can also be adapted by teachers for use with children and young people.

Each card contains a bold image on one side and a case study on the back. Each case study or quote is drawn from research with children and young people and offers a snapshot of their lives.

All of the stories and images on the next few pages relate to the theme of **Sexual health and wellbeing.**

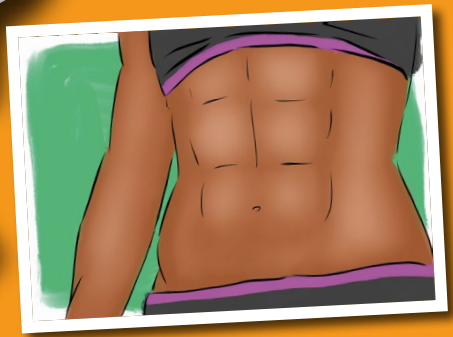
Choose one of the stories on this page to read and:

Ask: Are you surprised when you turn over the card?

Consider: What norms or expectations are over-turned when you explore what or how young people are learning about RSE?

Reflect: How do you feel about what you have read? What more do you want to know?

For more ideas about how to use the CRUSH cards in professional learning workshops see the ***StARTing Out*** case studies in this resource.



Tessa: This boy called Caden, his profile pictures him like?

Myra: Oh yeah, with a massive six-pack.

Researcher: Is he your age?

Tessa: Yeah ... boys are like called gay if they do that.

(age 12)

Izzy, Ria, Karina and Cassy talk about padded bras as they dress up a fictional body outline in party clothing. Izzy says, that her body 'needs a padded bra so people look at her boobs'. Ria swiftly interjects, 'she needs a padded bra to hide them!'. Karina says that padded bras help protect her nipples which are sometimes sore now they are growing.

Later, Cassy draws a big dildo onto the body. "She needs one of those". They all fall about laughing.

Researcher: Why does she need one?

Izzy: Because she's a girl!

(age 11)

Casey: I cried when I got my first period, I cried because I thought I'd never be able to wear, like, regular underwear forever, and I thought I had to wear pads for, like, the rest of my life.

Researcher: Can I ask how old you were?

Casey: Ten.

Rhian: Yeah, we'd only done it in science and not PSE (…) like, we got... we got... we got one in like the last week or something (of primary school).

Casey: Yeah. And then they take the girls away for when they're talking about periods (…) but I think everyone should have been in attendance because, like, it's important for everyone to know about that stuff, because most of the boys don't have much knowledge.

Tambara and Leila (age 13) are talking about vaginas and vulvas, and the difference between them, following a conversation about sex education lessons in primary school.

Tambara: I'm... I'm just too bored to differentiate (between vulva and vagina). I know they're different. I know they're different, I just use … vagina … it's more widely used.

Leila: Hmm.

Tambara: Some people don't even call it a vagina as well, they like... I remember in primary school they had, like, all different names for it (…)

Leila: Vajuju. That's what my friend used to call it (…) and Vajayjay!

Tambara: Yeah. So, like, people don't actually know, it's like it's a normal body part, like any other part and I feel like we need to know from a young age.

Leila: Yeah. But then people would say penis, so...

Tambara: I know, people say that... people say that and then, like, well...

Leila: Yeah.

Tambara: VAGINA!

Leila: People are more, like, grossed out.

Tambara: There's way more stigma around vaginas than there are penises.

Fay: "I've got one of those 'When you grow up' books and on masturbation it said, 'When you do something that makes you feel good" and that was the description of it. And I was like, 'okay anything I do that makes me feel good - that's masturbation!'

Shanon: You weren't to know!

Fay: Exactly! I was nine. So I looked, and it wasn't an explicit description. It was like when you do something that makes you feel good. So I was like, 'so everything I do that I enjoy, that's masturbation'. That was what I was thinking about it and my brain was like, 'no'. I was like 9.

Shanon: My mum got me one when I was 12. She bought me three books: one about puberty, one about periods and one about body image. I only read half of one. One talked about cancer, and I got scared.

(age 14)

Starting out with sexual health and wellbeing

This is me

Several teachers have created a fingerprint tree with children in Years 1,2, 5 and 6 in primary and young people in Key Stage 3 in a special school. For this activity, children and young people drew a tree and filled the trunk and branches with their fingerprints. They used a magnifying glass to look at their fingerprints in detail and talked about the fact that they are all similar but unique. In older year groups, young people also made notes around the tree about things that are similar and different between them as a group. In the younger year groups, children listed what makes everyone unique and listened to the song 'This is me' from 'The Greatest Showman'.

A recognition that everyone's body is unique and special to them. (RSE code 2022)

What is love?

A few primary teachers have explored relationships and feelings with children in Years 1 and 2. Working in small groups children explore the question, WHAT IS LOVE?. They write their answers on sticky notes and put them on large sheets of paper. In one year 1 and 2 class children wrote things like, *Mam a dad, Teulu/family, Ffrindiau/Friends, Boy or girl who loves boy or girl.*

Next the children explored the question *HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL WHEN THEY ARE IN LOVE?* And they said things like, *Cyffrous/excited, Hapus/happy, Trist/sad, Enbaras/embarrassed, Cenfigennus/jealous.* They discussed some of these feelings and the children explained that you can feel jealous if you love someone and they don't love you back and they love someone else. Or that you can feel embarrassed if someone likes you or loves you and you don't want them to. At the end of the session, the children made pipe cleaner hearts and hung them on the pear tree outside the classroom, **"just to remind them as they passed everyday about the love around them". (Primary teacher).**

Awareness of the different feelings one can have, recognising other people's feelings and how these may differ to your own. (RSE code 2022)

Stories for exploring life cycles, relationships and change

A primary teacher read the book *Tadpole's Promise* with Year 4. This is a story about a caterpillar and a tadpole who fall in love. When the tadpole turns into a frog and the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, their relationship changes. In the end, the frog eats the butterfly. As well as using the story to talk about relationships, this was also the starting point for the class learning more about the lifecycle of the butterfly and the human.

"The children are mortified when the frog eats the butterfly! But we use the story to talk about the fact that sometimes relationships don't work out, sometimes things go wrong and that people and relationships change. It makes for really good conversations." (RSE lead, Primary school)

An awareness of the human life cycle and that reproduction is a part of life. (RSE code 2022)

Exploring language and body parts

A secondary school teacher asked a class of Year 8 students to explore the language used for talking about genitalia. Young people worked in small friendship groups. Each had a large piece of paper and wrote down all the words for the vulva and all the words for the penis that they could think of. As a class they found that there were more words for the vulva, than the penis and that many of the words for the vulva were derogatory and used as insults. This led to a whole class discussion about language, gender and misogyny. At the end the class and teacher agreed on what terms they would use in future lessons, which were focused on puberty and anatomy.

"I found this lesson really inspiring as a teacher." (RSE lead)

Critically engaging with positive and negative representations of a diversity of bodies, including through various forms of media and understanding that these can be unrealistic and harmful. (RSE code 2022)

The use of accurate terminology for all body parts (RSE Code 2022)

For more ideas about how to explore vulva and vaginal health and anatomy in secondary schools, have a look at the PSHE Association's ***Truth Undressed*** guidance and lesson plans for years 7 - 11 ***pshe-association.org.uk/canesten-the-truth-undressed***. Or take a look at Brook's free ***Different is normal*** microsite aimed at educating young people about the vulva.

For primary age children, see the Eve Appeal's ***Know your body*** programme which includes lesson plans, powerpoints, activity resources and top tips for primary educators working with children in year 3 upwards. ***www.knowyourbodylessons.org***

To explore this area using an interdisciplinary approach, download the free **Sex and History education resource pack** and see how you can use historical objects such as a chastity belt or a Roman pendant to explore a range of sexual health and wellbeing topics, including genital and body norms. Lesson plans are designed for secondary schools.

Getting started with sexual health and wellbeing creatively

A primary teacher carried out a series of creative activities with Year 6 students to get started with exploring the theme of sexual health and wellbeing.

Making junk model bodies: Children were provided with a pile of materials and asked to make a junk model body. They used the bodies to learn about the correct names for different body parts and to think about how to take care of our bodies.

A menstrual product science enquiry project: Working in small groups children researched the absorbency of different period products by dipping them in water and noticing what happens. Children asked lots of questions during this activity and the class talked about what happens to a body during menstruation.

Reading and learning about what makes a baby: To support the children's understanding of reproduction, the class looked at the story *What Makes a Baby* by Cory Silverberg and Fiona Smyth. Children were then asked to make a character or element from the story using playdoh. They created all kinds of things - a sperm, a foetus, a baby. As they were making and sharing their sculptures, we could find out what they already knew and didn't know and what more they wanted to know.

View the film to see some of this creative pedagogy in practice.

Knowledge and understanding of how reproductive organs develop in a human body. This includes understanding fertility and the processes of reproduction, including what supports menstrual health and well-being (RSE code 2022)

Recognising the process of pregnancy and birth. Awareness of how human bodies change as they grow. importance of menstrual well-being. (RSE code 2022)

The use of accurate terminology for all body parts (RSE code 2022)

An awareness of the human life cycle and that reproduction is a part of life (RSE code 2022)

For ideas about how to take an interdisciplinary approach to menstruation education, see ***page 29***.

Health Gloves

A special school teacher wanted to introduce learners to a range of contraception methods. They passed around different examples from a contraceptive tool kit, giving young people time to touch and look at each method and ask questions confidentially if they wanted to.

Next they asked each learner to draw round their hand and write the four main aspects of personal health on the fingers - emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual - and to write physical on the thumb. Next learners looked at which aspects of their personal health contraception could protect against and cut off the 'fingers' of the glove that it couldn't protect against. They were left with only the thumb. They tried doing this with a latex glove and wearing the glove with all but one of the digits cut off. As a class, this prompted a discussion about the emotional, social, intellectual and spiritual consequences and outcomes of sex and helped the class to explore more holistically what makes sex safe or unsafe.

Understanding of good sexual and reproductive health, including the range of risks and outcomes from sexual experiences and the knowledge needed to support informed decisions about sexual activity and about reproductive choices. (RSE code 2022)

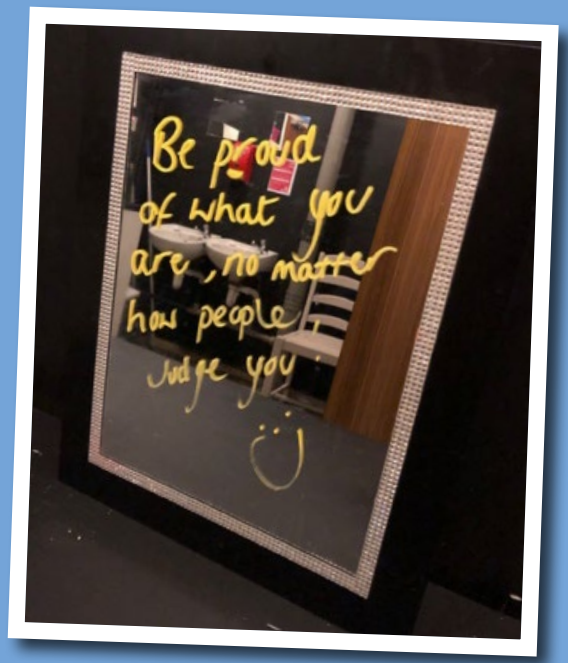
Understanding how contraception can assist with reproductive choices, including awareness of abortion (RSE code 2022)

For accessible information, graphics and animated videos on each method of contraception see Brook's contraception guide: ***hwww.brook.org.uk/topics/contraception*** Also see the bilingual contraception handout on contraception / atal cenhedlu and condoms / CONDOMAU ***www.brook.org.uk/resources***

Mirror, Mirror

One secondary school teacher explored body image with a group of young people. She gave every learner a paper mirror and asked them to design their own message for what they would like people to see reflected when they look in the mirror. Afterwards, they framed the best designs and messages and hung them around the school. Secretly, the teacher wrote some of the messages on the school toilet mirrors so that all learners could read these affirmative messages across the school.

Critically engaging with positive and negative representations of a diversity of bodies, including through various forms of media and understanding that these can be unrealistic and harmful (RSE code 2022)



Becoming resourceful

To read more about how teachers are getting started with the theme of Sexual Health and Wellbeing read the following CRUSH case studies:

We love RSE (Foundation phase)

Re-making RSE (Key stage 2)

RSE: Canvassing voice (Special school)

Branching Out (Key stage 2)

Hearts and Minds (Secondary school)

Shaking things up (Secondary school)

For more ideas on how to get started with this theme, have a look at the following case studies from the resource ***Agenda: supporting children and young people in making positive relationships matter.*** This is a free bilingual resource to help children, young people and educators explore our bodily relationships creatively. To find out more about the resource, go to: ***neu.org.uk/agenda***. This includes a recorded 2 hour online professional learning session for teachers.

EveryBODY Matters

Feeling Difference and Diversity with Movement, Sound and Image

BODY (RE)FORMING

Creating textiles, sculptures and maps to spark conversations about how beauty standards impact our bodies and communities

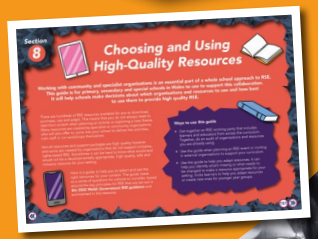
WE MOVE

Using the power of dance and sisterhood to celebrate black cultural history and challenge misogynoir.

To access free online training for educators go to Brook Learn. You will find free courses on a range of sexual health and wellbeing themes including abortion, contraception, pleasure, puberty and STIs. ***learn.brook.org.uk***

brook LEARN

There are many organisations and resources that can support you to get started with the theme of Sexual Health and Well-being. To help you assess the quality of any resource that you come across, go to the section, ***"Choosing and Using Resources"***. This section hosts a toolkit that has been developed using the key principles for RSE outlined in the Welsh Government RSE Guidance (2022).



EMPOWERMENT, SAFETY AND RESPECT

What's in the RSE Code?

This strand focuses on:

- learners' rights to safety and protection and freedom from harm and discrimination
- how and where to seek information, help and support
- how to support and advocate for the rights, fair treatment and respect of all

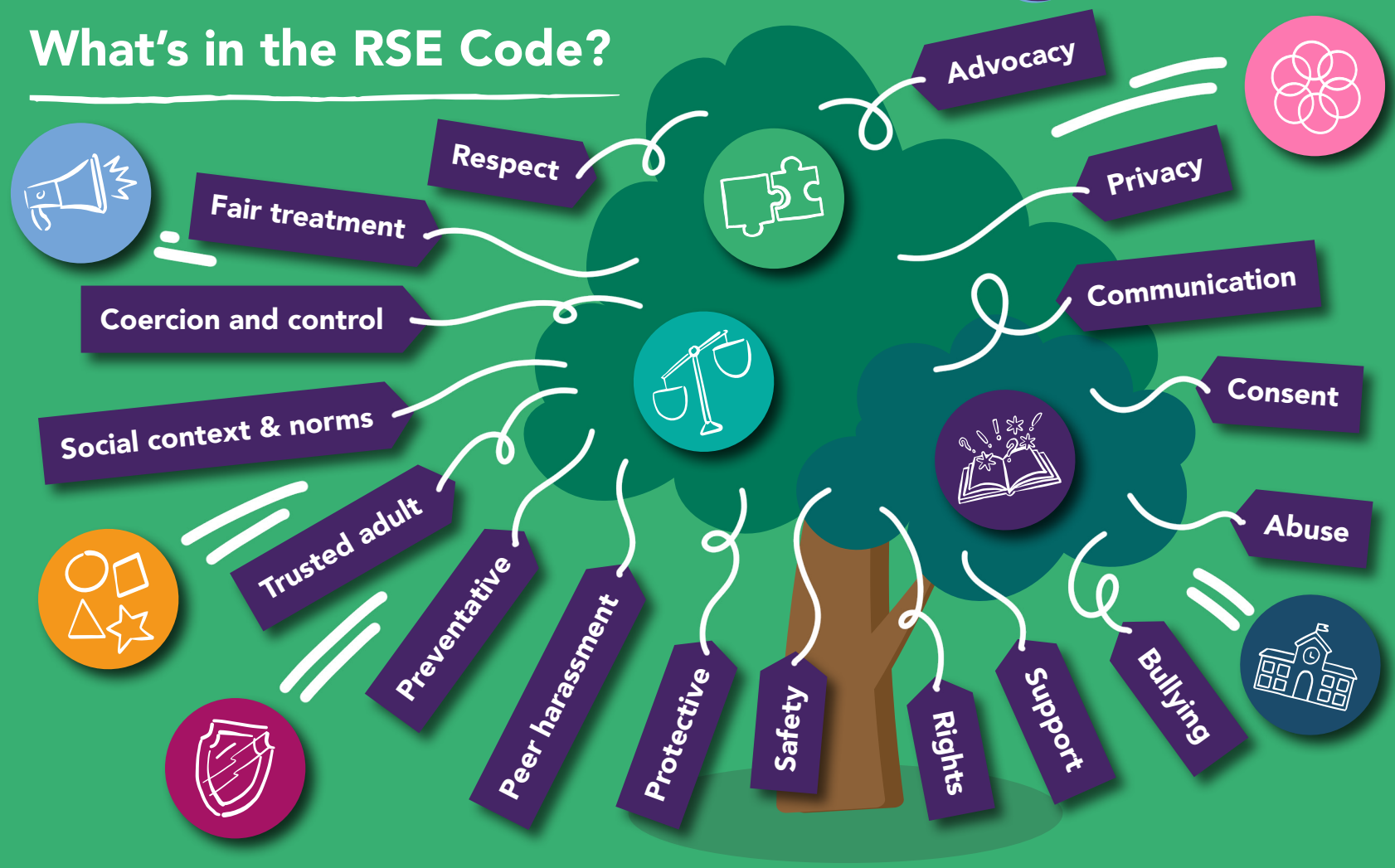
This strand builds on the positive behaviours and skills of healthy relationships. It reinforces the requirement to support learners to develop empathy, kindness and compassion towards each other and empowering them with the confidence to draw upon available support if they are concerned about their own safety or that of others.

They should be supported to understand that exercising their right to be free from all forms of discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect is enabled by trusted adults who can support their safety. This includes through a number of legal protections that exist for all. Criminal law makes such behaviours unlawful and there are criminal sanctions for those found guilty of committing such offences.

Learners need to develop an understanding of the social, emotional, physical and legal nature and impact of harmful behaviours, including all bullying, and LGBTQ+ based bullying, sexual violence and gender-based violence in a range of contexts, including online.

Welsh Government 2022

What's in the RSE Code?



Empowerment, Safety and Respect strand mandatory content

Phase 1 (from age 3)	**Phase 2** (from age 7)	**Phase 3** (from age 11)
Recognising harmful behaviour including behaviours which are discriminatory and the right to be free from discrimination. Ability to interact with others in a way that is fair.	Understanding of the importance of fair treatment for all and of respect in all interpersonal interactions offline and online. Recognising the value of non-discriminatory behaviours and when and how to take safe action to respond to and challenge discriminatory behaviours.	Understanding the importance of inclusivity, including for LGBTQ+ people, nondiscrimination and the value of diversity in our interpersonal behaviours and relationships. Developing a sense of individual and social responsibility to others, including consideration of how we respond to behaviours that are discriminatory, disrespectful and harmful, offline and online.
Recognising the right to be free from harmful, abusive and bullying behaviour. An awareness of how to recognise positive and harmful behaviours, including bullying. Ability to share with a trusted adult when faced with harmful behaviours.	Understanding of the right for everyone to be free from harm or abuse. An awareness of different kinds of harmful or abusive behaviour including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and neglect, including peer on peer harassment and bullying and the role technology can play. How to seek support for oneself, and offer support to others. How to be a good friend and advocate for others.	Understanding of good sexual and reproductive health, including the range of risks and outcomes from sexual experiences and the knowledge needed to support informed decisions about sexual activity and about reproductive choices.

Empowerment, Safety and Respect strand mandatory content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)

(Phases 1 and 2 include pre-requisite knowledge and skills for understanding the learning on consent at phase 3)

Beginning to recognise that other people have thoughts, feelings and opinions that are different.

An awareness of the need to seek agreement in order to share, for example toys.

An awareness of everyone's right to privacy, personal boundaries and which parts of the body are private.

Ability to communicate if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Phase 2 (from age 7)

Understanding of the right to bodily privacy, personal boundaries including online.

Understanding how behaviours may be perceived by others offline and online.

Recognising which steps to take to keep safe from harm both in offline and online friendships.

Understanding the social and emotional norms and pressures that lead to non-consensual behaviours, friendships and relationships, for example, gender norms.

Developing the skills to build consensual behaviours and relationships and know how to safely respond, challenge and report nonconsensual behaviours and relationships offline and online.

Phase 3 (from age 11)

Understanding of the importance of consent for safe and healthy relationships and in particular sexual relationships.

Understanding of how consent can be communicated in different social contexts and relationships, including online.

A critical understanding of how consent is impacted by perception and social context and the factors that influence and impair people's ability to engage in consensual behaviour, for example, substances, violence, coercion and relationship norms.

Empowerment, Safety and Respect strand mandatory content (continued)

Phase 1 (from age 3)	**Phase 2** (from age 7)	**Phase 3** (from age 11)
Awareness of how to keep safe when using digital media, including sharing with a trusted adult when they feel uncomfortable or scared.	**Know how and when digital media can be shared safely, with permission and when it can be a source of harm.** **Awareness of the benefits and dangers of the internet and social media in forming friendships online.** **Exploring the motives behind fabricated and digitally-altered media.**	**Understand the ethical and legal issues relating to the consensual and non-consensual sharing of self-generated imagery, and rights to safety, support, well-being and protection.** **Understanding the impacts associated with sexual material and intimacy online, including the ethical and legal implications.**

Welsh Government 2022

View the full RSE code **here**

How are children and young people living and learning about empowerment, safety and respect?

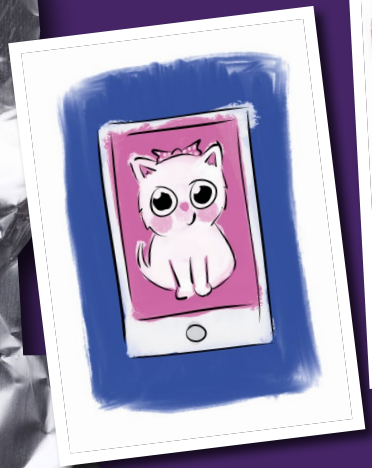
Closing the gap

There is a big gap between children and young people's lived experiences and the RSE they experience in school. Research shows that RSE often fails to address children and young people's questions and concerns and that many children struggle to find themselves and their experiences reflected in the RSE curriculum.

To address this gap we created the CRUSH CARDS to use with teachers in our professional learning programme. They can also be adapted by teachers for use with children and young people.

Each card contains a bold image on one side and a case study on the back. Each case study or quote is drawn from research with children and young people and offers a snapshot into their lives.

All of the stories and images on the next few pages relate to the theme of **Empowerment, safety and respect.**



Choose one of the stories on this page to read and:

Ask: Are you surprised when you turn over the card?

Consider: What norms or expectations are over-turned when you explore what or how young people are learning about RSE?

Reflect: How do you feel about what you have read? What more do you want to know?

For more ideas about how to use the CRUSH cards in professional learning workshops see the ***StARTing Out*** case studies in this resource.

Allan (14) and Liam (age 13) live in a predominantly white, working class ex-steel mining community which they describe as 'a shady area', 'rough' and 'laddy', 'where people walk like kings'. When the researcher asks what is 'rough' about the area they talk about burnt down houses, drug abuse and men with sledgehammers 'knocking down parking meters'. While 'usually' they say they feel 'safe' by not 'talking to anyone', they describe sexualised street harassment as commonplace and something that gets worse in school.

'People touch me a lot ... because I'm quite developed', says Allan, covering his breasts. "And I'm like, don't touch me!". Allan shares a memory in Year 8 after he had already 'come out' as gender fluid and 'gay' in school:

'This guy, Shane, um, he actually just started stroking my thigh, like literally, by here (points to upper inner thigh and crotch) and he, he told me to take off my shirt ... he was like, are they fake? and I was like, they are not fake' and he was like, all right, prove it then, take off your shirt and show me, and I was like, no and I slapped his hand away'.

Allan and Liam both describe themselves as having 'real bad anger issues' in school because of how they sometimes 'respond', 'violently' to the gender and sexual harassment they experience. Allan in particular talks about 'getting in a lot of trouble' and 'kicked someone once'. For Allan, home life is also hostile: 'my parents are really homophobic, like hate all that, so I can't be like hey guys im gender fluid'. In contrast, Liam's mum has always been supportive of his 'coming out' at 11 as 'agender', and then 'gender-fluid' and 'gay'.

Carys: There was this boy in school, and he started to pick up this girl's skirt.

Tia: That really insulted her so she started wearing trousers as like...

Carys: Protection.

Rhi: Um protection.

Tia: I, I just wear shorts under my skirt so there's no chance of that happening.

Rhi: Um, I remember, I remember hearing something on the news about um that teachers say to boys that they couldn't wear shorts at school.

Tia: Yes and then they started wearing skirts.

Carys: Yeah it was boiling hot so they started wearing skirts.

Researcher: What did you think about that?

Rhi: I am proud.

Tia: Yeah.

(age 10)

Jodi is 13 years old and she is asked repeatedly to send a nude photo. Jodi says she can't win because just by being known to be asked for images some people will call her a 'slut', and if she does send an image she doesn't know what will happen. Responding, Jodi sends an image of a cat.

"Matilda (age 5, white Welsh) talks about how boys 'annoy me and Isabel all the time... they always get us and they try to kiss us and, and, they're just trying to chase us and get a kiss and then they annoy us'. She continues: "It's OK, 'cause sometimes they chase us really funny, sometimes they don't' and 'sometimes we chase them ... sometimes we scare them ... we just use superpowers!' Matilda laughs and shows off her superpower, stretching out her arms"

Sharman (age 13, white Welsh) describes her life as 'weird', 'not normal', explaining how "many things have happened to me and it's just not safe for me". She talks about how she and her mum had to move away from her violent father when she was 6 and stay off the internet so he couldn't "track her down" and when she was physically attacked by a group of boys from her primary school, who 'came onto' her in a car-park, leaving her badly shaken, with scars on her shoulder and elbow.

While 'not feeling safe' is part and parcel of daily life, Sharman is a survivor, and it is in her visceral descriptions of seeking out, and playing in mud that she seems to carve out a space for experiencing moments of pure delight and pleasure:

Me and the boys try and go down the skate-park at least once a week. It's fun ... when it's wet it's the BEST. You slip ... you slip and slide down the bottom into the puddles ... Yeah ... I get my hoodie on, get my tracksuit, old trainers, not my new ones and go out in the mud. Don't bother about my hair and makeup.... we go up the park, or anywhere where it's muddy [...] we go like, 'I feel like rolling in mud', and then we go rolling! [...] We make mud slides and slide down them, get mud all down our backs and we sort of throw mud at each other, its FUN!. We are like, 'where can I find MUD'.

Starting out with empowerment, safety and respect

Support clouds

Many of the schools we have worked with have done the ***'support cloud' activity*** with children and young people to help create a safe working environment for RSE and explore who and what makes learners feel safe. In this activity each child or young person has a cloud.

On the cloud they write down at least 5 trusted people they could talk to if they wanted help and support on something. On the other side of the cloud they write what would make them feel safe and supported in RSE. Groups then create support cloud mobiles that can be hung in the classroom and used in every RSE lesson to remind learners of the importance of creating safe and inclusive spaces for RSE.

Recognising trusted adults who can help them and whom they can talk to and ask questions of, especially when they feel unhappy or unsafe. (RSE code 2022)

Be able to identify trustworthy sources of information and able to raise issues and questions with trusted adults. (RSE code 2022)

What is touch?

In one primary school children in the foundation phase explored the question 'what is touch?' using different sensory materials such as plasticine, slime, tin, glitter, cotton wool, sandpaper and water. Next children explored the concepts of happy touch and sad, supported touch with people they knew and didn't know. They also considered different types of touch such as the kiss and the hug. Using the NCSPCC's P.A.N.T.S. resource groups of children also explored appropriate and inappropriate touch and delivered an assembly to the whole school.

An awareness of everyone's right to privacy, personal boundaries and which parts of the body are private. (RSE code 2022)

Beginning to recognise that other people have thoughts, feelings and opinions that are different (RSE code 2022)

Ability to communicate if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. (RSE code 2022)

An awareness that everyone has the right to be safe and no one is allowed to harm anyone else. (RSE code 2022)

Reading dogs

Children in years 1 and 2 at one primary school learnt about consent through working with the reading dogs that came in to visit the school. As part of this project, children needed to negotiate permission to greet the dog and work out whether it was ok to touch the dog and what kind of touch might be ok. To extend the project, children learnt about different greetings around the world.

Ability to interact with others in a way that is fair. (RSE code 2022)

An awareness of everyone's right to privacy, personal boundaries and which parts of the body are private. (RSE code 2022)

Beginning to recognise that other people have thoughts, feelings and opinions that are different. (RSE code 2022)

Ability to communicate if someone is touching them in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable. (RSE code 2022)

An awareness that everyone has the right to be safe and no one is allowed to harm anyone else. (RSE code 2022)

Signalling consent

One primary teacher has been exploring relationships and consent with their Year 2 class and talking about how personal boundaries can change depending on who we are with.

As part of their work, the teacher introduced a visual aid to help children share with staff how they are feeling and how they would like to be greeted as they enter the classroom. Children can point to a picture of a wave, handshake, 'good morning', fist bump, high five or hug to show how they would like to be greeted. They can also point to an emotion picture to share with staff how they are feeling.

"We talked about love and relationships with our family – is a hug / kiss from them ok? What about the same from a stranger or a friend? The children soon started to realise that certain actions are not appropriate from certain people around them. One child mentioned that the space around us is important as it is ours. I demonstrated invading personal space by sitting a bit too close to a child on the carpet (I asked their permission beforehand). They then explained to the rest of the class how it made them feel. We agreed that even though our families – we still have a voice and a right to say NO!" (RSE lead, Primary)

The *Brook Learn* platform has a free e-learning programme for professional on consent. This includes an activity called 'Meet and Greet' that uses handshakes and other greetings to learn about and experience consent. ***www.brook.org.uk/your-life/courses/consent***

Playing it right

One primary school has set up their play area to try and help make it safe and inclusive for everyone. The school has 'play rangers' who go out and lead games for children in the playground. Children who don't have anyone to play with can join in with the games the play rangers have set up. There are also 'conflict resolution rangers' who go round and talk to children sitting on 'buddy bunches' to encourage them to come and play. The conflict resolution rangers also look for early warning signs of any bullying happening in the playground.

In the foundation phase the teacher led a session to explore children's experiences of using the playground and made changes as a result of their responses.

'I did it like a philosophy for children session so that the children had some time to think and share their views. I asked questions like 'what do you like about the playground? What don't you like? what makes you feel safe and comfortable in the playground? What do you want to change about the playground?' They were quite vocal. There were lots of things coming up and children were saying, 'I don't like it', 'I don't feel safe' and they were quite strong about these things (RSE lead, primary school).

An awareness that everyone has the right to be safe and no one is allowed to harm anyone else. (RSE code 2022)

Ability to speak up for each other. (RSE code 2022)

Recognising the right to be free from harmful, abusive and bullying behaviour. (RSE code 2022)

An awareness of how to recognise positive and harmful behaviours, including bullying. (RSE code 2022)

Ability to share with a trusted adult when faced with harmful behaviours. (RSE code 2022)

Setting up an LGBTQ group

After carrying out a large scale creative audit, one secondary school identified that homophobic bullying was a problem at the school. In response the school set up an LGBTQ group. The group started meeting once a week and got together with a similar group at another secondary school to help the new group focus their ideas and identify their priorities.

The group decided that their aim is to support the development of an RSE curriculum specifically related to LGBTQ+ relationships and to provide a space for LGBTQ+ young people to support each other, fundraise and effect whole school change. They have called themselves UNDOD and we've worked with the art department to design an UNDOD logo. The logo has been graffitied onto the school wall.

"In the summer we had a Pride day as part of the summer programme, which was a turning point for our school. The day was a celebration of diversity, inclusion and belonging and it felt like the moment at which teachers and young people understood what we are trying to achieve through RSE - loving who you are and being different" (RSE lead, secondary school)

Understanding the importance of inclusivity, including for LGBTQ+ people, nondiscrimination and the value of diversity in our interpersonal behaviours and relationships. (RSE code 2022)

Becoming resourceful

To read more about how teachers are getting started with the theme of Empowerment, safety and respect read the following CRUSH case studies:

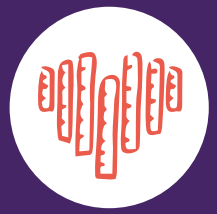
Hearts and Minds (Key stage 3 and 4)

Shaking things up (Key stage 3 and 4)

For more ideas on how to get started with this theme, have a look at the following case studies from the resource ***Agenda: supporting children and young people in making positive relationships matter***. This is a free bilingual resource to help children, young people and educators explore positive relationships creatively, including gender-related and sexual bullying, harassment and violence. To find out more about the resource, go to: ***neu.org.uk/agenda***. This includes a recorded 2 hour online professional learning session for teachers.

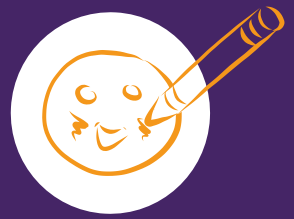
CRAFTING EQUALITY

Stitching our rights to make a safe, fair and more equal world for all



RULER HEART

Ruling out sexual harassment using the visual arts in a school assembly



SAM'S STORY

Addressing bullying cultures in schools through art, stories, drama, helping hands and a cwtch.

DIGITAL DIVERSITY CLUB

Supporting and celebrating gender and sexual inclusivity in school and online

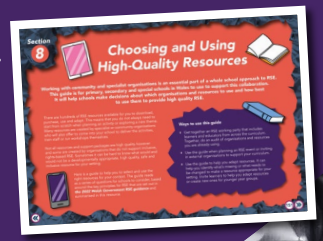
UNDER PRESSURE?

Using the physics curriculum to explore control and consent through sound, movement and a glitch-art app

VOICES OVER SILENCE

Creating mood boards, posters and a film to spark a conversation about girl's rights and FGM

There are many organisations and resources that can support you to get started with the theme of Empowerment, Safety and Respect. To help you assess the quality of any resource that you come across, go to the section, ***"Choosing and Using Resources"***. This section hosts a toolkit that has been developed using the key principles for RSE outlined in the Welsh Government RSE Guidance (2022).



Section 6

Starting Out with Engaging Parents around RSE

RSE legislation in Wales states that all children aged 3-16 have a legal right to RSE and that parents and carers are not able to withdraw their child from RSE. This means that, from 2022 onwards, Wales is moving away from working with parents and carers to *gain consent* for RSE and moving towards working with parents and carers to *inform, engage and support* RSE.

This is a new way of working for some schools and may require new strategies for communicating and engaging with parents and carers about the changes and the ongoing curriculum work in this area.

> ***"Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community, offering them the opportunity to engage with learning and teaching in RSE"***
>
> **RSE Guidance, Welsh Government 2022**

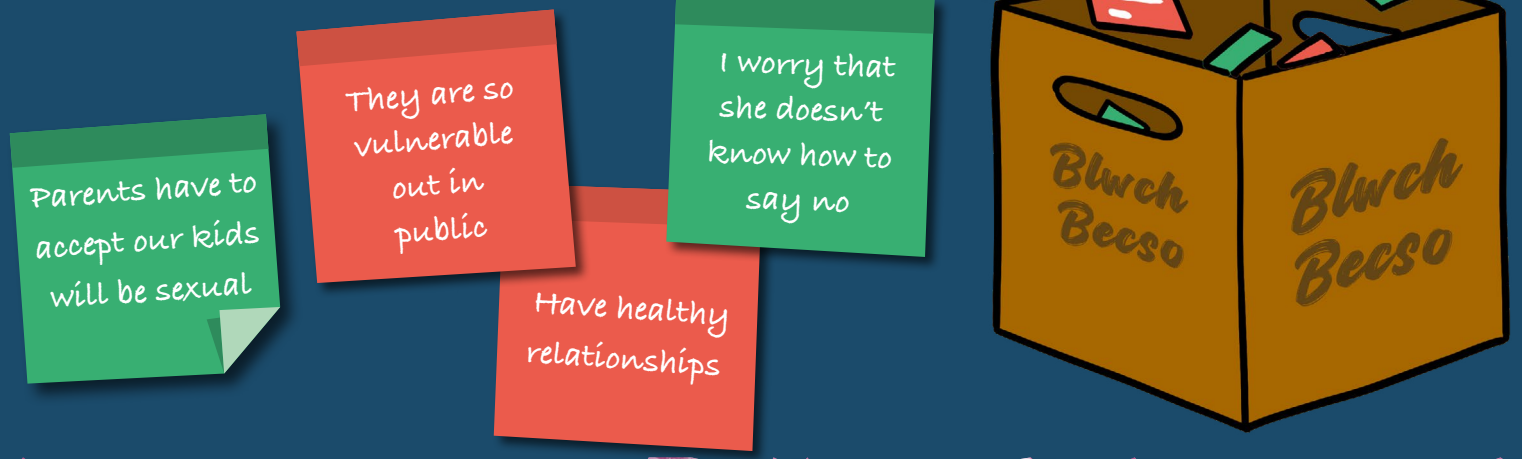
This section spotlights some of the ways that teachers in Wales are getting started with engaging parents and carers in their communities. All of these teachers have taken part in our intensive RSE professional learning programme.

'Bothering' with parents

A teacher in a special school (in a semi-rural area of south Wales) works with children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. She carried out a ***creative audit*** at her school and wanted to listen to the views of parents, as well as children, staff and school governors.

The school holds regular coffee mornings for parents and she asked to join one of them. She then invited parents to take part in a 'bothering box' activity. The teacher provided a box and slips of paper and pens and asked parents to anonymously share all the things that 'bother' them about RSE. This helped open up conversations about parents' questions, fears and concerns for their children. Most of these fears were not about the RSE curriculum but about parents' worries for their children's future relationships and sexual experiences.

This meant that the teacher was able to share how RSE can protect and empower their children to support them now and in the future. The teacher also brought with her the 'bothering box' that children had created so that she was able to share their questions and concerns anonymously with parents. This was a good opportunity for parents to tune into what their children were thinking, feeling and experiencing about RSE related issues.



Hosting parents

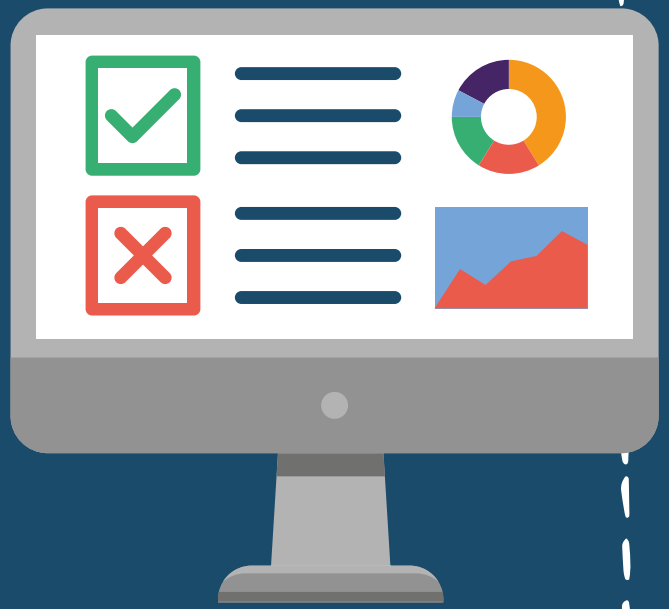
One secondary school (in a semi-rural town in south Wales) hosted an after school event for year 7 parents to introduce them to the new curriculum. RSE was introduced as part of the wider curriculum and there was a display for each of the components, including examples of work that pupils have done. The RSE lead was very prepared to answer questions on RSE and respond to any concerns that parents may have but from the cohort of 150. However, not one parent asked anything about RSE!

Surveying parents

A teacher in a primary school (in a West-Wales coastal town) conducted a ***creative audit*** in the year before RSE became statutory. She wanted to include parents in her audit. Working during the Covid-19 pandemic she was unable to invite parents to school for a workshop. Instead, she designed and sent out a digital survey that asked parents to share their views on what they thought their child needed to learn 'now' and what they thought they needed to learn before they left school in year 6 (age 11).

The teacher mapped their responses, alongside those from the creative audits with children and teachers to create an outline for their new RSE curriculum. Once RSE became statutory parents started to contact the school with a range of questions and concerns.

The school decided to host some informal sessions for parents and carers where they could mingle and look at examples of resources, which were set out around the room. There was no formal presentation but all members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) were present for support. The first session was well attended by 40 parents but the second by only one parent, suggesting perhaps that parents had got what they needed from session one!



Creating a parent forum

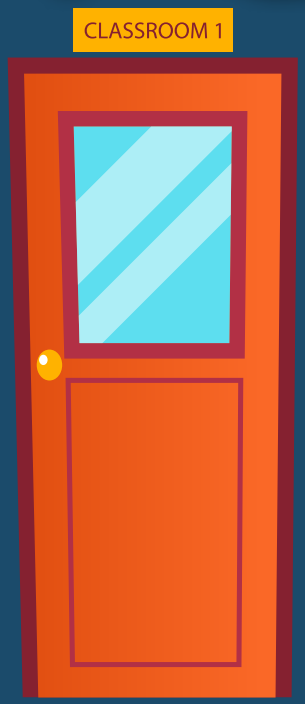
A rural village primary school (in south Wales) hosted a parent forum to share information about the new RSE curriculum. They used interactive and creative activities, including the ***CRUSH cards*** and the ***what jars you*** activity, to engage parents and introduce them to the new curriculum.

"We had a great turn out from parents and carers (a lot more than we expected) we also had governors and non-teaching staff attend. We started with a 'Big Question' - something that we do across all of our classes - "what is RSE?". We then guided the parents to the RSE crush cards which promoted discussion, questions and thoughts among all who attended. Following on from this we went over the RSE curriculum guidance followed by the 'What jars you' activity - again a great response made up of honest, thought-provoking answers. We had positive feedback after the evening, so we were pleased" (RSE Lead reflections)

Another forum meeting is planned where the school will share their new whole school vision for RSE, once they have had a chance to carry out further creative audits and find out more about what children want and need from the new curriculum.

Starting out with community leaders

A primary school (in an urban area of south Wales) arranged a meeting between local Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders to discuss the new RSE curriculum and forthcoming changes. The support and collaboration of religious leaders has helped the school to feel more confident about working with parents to develop the new curriculum moving forwards.



Youth work led approach

A youth worker in a rural part of north Wales approached a local secondary school and asked to set up a school-based LGBTQ+ group. At the time she was based in the school but also ran the youth clubs in her local area.

She explains: ***'We each have our own area and so that means you build a relationship in and outside of schools. I know the community…We're a very rural area with lots of farming and before we set up the groups there was nothing for LGBTQ+ young people in any of the high schools, no LBGTQ+ clubs or anything.'***

The group started to meet at lunch time and wanted to make a *'big banner for the front of the school'* which *'opened the door for conversation'* with parents. The youth worker is also able to work with parents, some of whom she already knows. She explains: ***There was one boy in year 8 that came and he said 'I think I'm Bisexual'. And he went home and told his mum and she phoned me and said 'what do I do?' and I said, 'you don't need to do anything, just go with it'. I think she just wanted reassurance.'***

Bonding with families

One special school (in semi-rural south Wales) has a family learning programme that helps families build positive relationships with their children through taking part in family bonding activities. After taking part in an RSE professional learning programme, the school has built RSE into the family learning programme ***'so that we are aware of what parents want to teach their children and support them to do that.' (Assistant head, Special school, Wales).***

Section 7

Building a Whole School Approach to RSE

This section of the resource outlines what a whole school approach to RSE looks like and provides tips and tools to help schools build their knowledge and capacity so that policy meets practice. We introduce you to a range of creative audit activities designed to support you to evaluate your current RSE provision and identify where change is needed.

MIND THE GAP: Mapping RSE across the curriculum

Which ***thematic areas*** do you currently explore across the six areas of learning and experience (AOLE)? Use this quick mapping chart to help you audit what you already offer, and how, and note down ideas (possibilities and challenges) for future provision.

	Expressive Arts	Health and Well-being	Maths and Numeracy	Humanities	Language, Literacy and Communication	Science and technology	Whole school environment
Relationships and Identity							
Sexual Health and Well-being							
Empowerment, Safety and Support							

Go to the section **"Making the RSE CODE Matter"** for full details of the content for each theme, for each phase.

Making RSE Matter with Butterfly Bingo

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

A whole school approach to RSE has the potential to transform what RSE can become in your school.

The butterfly bingo is a tool has been designed to support schools to engage with the new RSE curriculum and guidance in Wales.

It can be used to raise awareness of what might be included in a whole school approach to RSE or as an audit tool to evaluate current RSE provision and identify where change is needed.

Using this tool, the whole school approach is structured around 8 key domains:

Gather together members of your school community to form a working group - a reminder that this is not a journey that can be driven forwards by one member of staff, or pupil.

Listen and notice what's going on across different areas of your school. The following pages of the guide will share tools and activities to help you do this.

Evaluate how your school is doing across each of the eight domains using the butterfly spectrum.

Share with your school community how well the school is doing and what needs to change for the future.

There are blank squares for students, staff and wider school community to add their own ideas of how they think their school and community can be providing an inclusive, holistic, empowering, creative, co-produced and protective Relationships and Sexuality Education for all.

Why a butterfly?

The metaphor of the butterfly and its journey from caterpillar to pupa to butterfly captures the transformative potential of a whole school approach.

The idea of the 'butterfly effect' is also useful in helping us to understand how change can play out in an unpredictable and ever-changing school environment.

[The 'butterfly effect' is the idea that small actions can have an impact on complex systems, like the weather.

'...like a butterfly that beats its wings in one corner of the globe and with that single action changes the weather halfway across the world' (Alice Hoffman, Ice queen)]

Butterfly Bingo

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

KEY:

- School leadership and policy
- Professional learning
- Curriculum and pedagogy
- Community and partnership building
- Safeguarding and support
- School culture and environment
- Student voice and participation
- Reflection and Assessment

Undertake annual participatory action research inquiry to assess student, staff, parent/carer and community needs

Offer a holistic and inclusive curriculum, across each area of learning and experience

Accessible and inclusive support services that meets the needs of all students

Annual student-led, staff facilitated audit to monitor RSE provision, including support services

Collaborating with local and national organisations, services, groups and individuals who can support RSE provision

Organise accessible RSE themed events to build shared learning (e.g. parent/carer coffee morning, school assembly, after-school drama performance or art exhibition)

A designated management lead to take responsibility and co-ordinate whole school approach to RSE

Workload allocation for core RSE team

RSE is clearly timetabled and provided at regular intervals throughout the school year

Co-produce assessment and evaluation with students

Regular assessment and evaluation of how RSE provision is meeting student's needs

External agencies support RSE in line with the school's own RSE values, policy and curriculum

Make the school's RSE policy visible in different ways (e.g. RSE logo; posters, digital story on school TV; school assemblies; newsletters homes; school website)

Set up a diverse student-led, staff facilitated RSE working group

Membership of RSE networks and organisations (e.g. sex education forum)

A named RSE lead for each area of learning and experience

Annual RSE report sharing progress and future planning (accessible for students, parents/carers and community)

Experiment with participatory and creative ways to dip-test how core RSE messages are being practiced and reinforced

A clear and comprehensive RSE policy co-produced with students, parents/carers, governors and staff

In-house and school counsellors and nurses providing support and provision in line with the school's RSE policy and practice

Regularly ask, listen to and act upon what students think makes for safe and inclusive learning environments (e.g. from resources used in lessons, to LGBTQ youth group)

RSE is given high status by senior management

RSE action group with relevant agencies and key individuals to identify and share local knowledge and data on key health, well-being and safe-guarding issues

Celebrate activities and achievements for annual RSE day in the local community (25th June)

Ongoing critical reflective practice portfolio for RSE leads/working group

Outreach RSE support and provision (e.g. by school nurse, counsellor or designated RSE leads)

RSE resources budget

RSE cluster events to share practice

Audit how RSE is provided and experienced in the school across key learning environments (e.g. classrooms, playgrounds, corridors, school trips etc)

In-house CPD and INSET for all staff and governors

Knowledge and access to local RSE services and regional, national and international RSE organisations

Create a safe and inclusive learning environment for students and teachers

Uses a range of interactive and affirmative pedagogy

Support students to raise awareness and campaign on RSE issues

Regular drop-in sessions for parents/carers to inform and comment upon RSE policy and provision

Ensure key messages, learning and skills are reinforced across the school

RSE resources are assessed for their suitability and effectiveness

Celebrate moments of how, when and where core messages of the school's RSE programme has been reinforced

Co-produce curriculum and pedagogy with students (e.g. from activities in lessons to fieldtrips and conferences)

RSE policy is connected to other relevant school policies (e.g. anti-bullying, safe-guarding, equalities, children's rights, VAWDASV, SEND etc.)

RSE annual student award

Support services available for core RSE team to access

Regular RSE training and development for RSE lead

Experiment with creative ways to share reflections, assessments and evaluations in school, with parents/carers and the wider community

RSE taught by staff who are trained, supported and confident

Butterfly Bingo

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

KEY:

- School leadership and policy
- Professional learning
- Curriculum and pedagogy
- Community and partnership building
- Safeguarding and support
- School culture and environment
- Student voice and participation
- Reflection and Assessment

Butterfly Bingo: School leadership and policy

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

A designated management lead to take responsibility and co-ordinate whole school approach to RSE

A clear and comprehensive RSE policy co-produced with students, parents/ carers, governors and staff

A named RSE lead for each area of learning and experience

RSE policy is connected to other relevant school policies (e.g. anti-bullying, safe-guarding, equalities, children's rights, VAWDASV, SEND etc.)

RSE is given high status by senior management

Butterfly Bingo: Professional learning

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

Membership of RSE networks and organisations (e.g. sex education forum)

Regular RSE training and development for RSE lead

RSE resources budget

Support services available for core RSE team to access

Workload allocation for core RSE team

RSE cluster events to share practice

In-house CPD and INSET for all staff and governors

Butterfly Bingo: Curriculum and pedagogy

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

External agencies support RSE in line with the school's own RSE values, policy and curriculum

RSE is clearly timetabled and provided at regular intervals throughout the school year

RSE taught by staff who are trained, supported and confident

Create a safe and inclusive learning environment for students and teachers

Offer a holistic and inclusive curriculum, across each area of learning and experience

RSE resources are assessed for their suitability and effectiveness

Uses a range of interactive and affirmative pedagogy

Butterfly Bingo: Community and partnership building

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

Celebrate activities and achievements for annual RSE day in the local community (25th June)

Collaborating with local and national organisations, services, groups and individuals who can support RSE provision

Organise accessible RSE themed events to build shared learning (e.g. parent/carer coffee morning, school assembly, after-school drama performance or art exhibition)

Regular drop-in sessions for parents/carers to inform and comment upon RSE policy and provision

Butterfly Bingo: Safeguarding and support

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

In-house and school counsellors and nurses providing support and provision in line with the school's RSE policy and practice

Outreach RSE support and provision (e.g. by school nurse, counsellor or designated RSE leads)

Accessible and inclusive support services that meets the needs of all students

Knowledge and access to local RSE services and regional, national and international RSE organisations

RSE action group with relevant agencies and key individuals to identify and share local knowledge and data on key health, well-being and safe-guarding issues

Butterfly Bingo: School culture and environment

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

Make the school's RSE policy visible in different ways (e.g. RSE logo; posters, digital story on school TV; school assemblies; newsletters homes; school website)

Audit how RSE is provided and experienced in the school across key learning environments (e.g. classrooms, playgrounds, corridors, school trips etc)

Celebrate moments of how, when and where core messages of the school's RSE programme has been reinforced

Ensure key messages, learning and skills are reinforced across the school

Experiment with participatory and creative ways to dip-test how core RSE messages are being practiced and reinforced

Butterfly Bingo: Student voice and participation

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

Annual student-led, staff facilitated audit to monitor RSE provision, including support services

Regularly ask, listen to and act upon what students think makes for safe and inclusive learning environments (e.g. from resources used in lessons, to LGBTQ youth group)

Co-produce assessment and evaluation with students

Support students to raise awareness and campaign on RSE issues

RSE annual student award

Set up a diverse student-led, staff facilitated RSE working group

Co-produce curriculum and pedagogy with students (e.g. from activities in lessons to fieldtrips and conferences)

Butterfly Bingo: Reflection and Assessment

a creative audit for a whole school approach to Relationships and Sexuality Education

Undertake annual participatory action research inquiry to assess student, staff, parent/carer and community needs

Regular assessment and evaluation of how RSE provision is meeting student's needs

Annual RSE report sharing progress and future planning (accessible for students, parents/carers and community)

Ongoing critical reflective practice portfolio for RSE leads/working group

Experiment with creative ways to share reflections, assessments and evaluations in school, with parents/carers and the wider community

Section 8

Choosing and Using High-Quality Resources

Working with community and specialist organisations is an essential part of a whole school approach to RSE. This guide is for primary, secondary and special schools in Wales to use to support this collaboration. It will help schools make decisions about which organisations and resources to use and how best to use them to provide high quality RSE.

There are hundreds of RSE resources available for you to download, purchase, use and adapt. This means that you do not always need to start from scratch when planning an activity or exploring a new theme. Many resources are created by specialist or community organisations who will also offer to come into your school to deliver the activities, train staff or run workshops themselves.

Not all resources and support packages are high quality however and some are created by organisations that do not support inclusive, rights-based RSE. Sometimes it can be hard to know what would and would not be a developmentally appropriate, high quality, safe and inclusive resource for your setting.

Here is a guide to help you to select and use the right resources for your context. The guide reads as a series of questions for schools to consider, based around the key principles for RSE that are set out in ***the 2022 Welsh Government RSE guidance*** and summarised in this resource.

Ways to use this guide

- Get together an RSE working party that includes learners and educators from across the curriculum. Together, do an audit of organisations and resources you are already using.
- Use the guide when planning an RSE event or inviting in external organisations to support your curriculum.
- Use the guide to help you adapt resources. It can help you identify what's missing or what needs to be changed to make a resource appropriate for your setting. Invite learners to help you adapt resources or create new ones for younger year groups.

INFORMED BY A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

"Teaching and learning in RSE should be supported by a whole-school approach to RSE and this is critical in supporting learners' well-being. This means effectively linking all aspects of school, including the curriculum, policy, staff, school environment and community to support learners in their relationships and sexuality education."

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you completed a whole school audit of your current RSE provision to help identify strengths, gaps and weaknesses?

Before engaging any external organisations or selecting any resources to use you will first need to audit your current RSE provision across all domains of a whole school approach. This will help you to identify what extra resource and support your school needs and to clarify the contribution that a new resource could make.

Make sure you involve students and staff in your audit and try to include parents and carers too. This will help you to map your current provision, identify gaps and to find out where the needs, questions and curiosities lie.

For more information about how to conduct a whole school creative audit see ***page 140***.

Do you have an RSE policy that outlines your vision and the key principles underpinning your approach to RSE?

Every school needs a strong RSE policy that outlines the school's commitment to the guiding principles for RSE set out in the Welsh Government guidance: Whole school approach to RSE, Enabling human rights and equity through RSE, LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE, RSE as a cross-cutting theme, developmentally appropriate RSE, positive, protective and preventative RSE.

This policy can be shared and discussed with organisations to try to establish a shared vision and commitment to these principles. A school is responsible for what is taught in the school and knows its own community well. As a school you will need to be clear about the content, methods and approach to be taken by any external contributor. Having a clear and informative policy will help you do this.

How will the resource/ organisation help develop a whole school approach?

Working with community and specialist organisations is an essential part of a whole school approach to RSE. External organisations should however be used to *enhance* and not *replace* the teaching of RSE. When speaking to organisations consider what contribution they can make to how RSE is delivered across the school or to the wider school culture and/or environment. For example, through contributing to the professional development of teachers, through creating new artefacts, digital materials or other resources that can be used, reused and adapted across the school.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY BASED

'Schools and settings should discuss RSE in the context of children's rights as protected by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). A rights-based approach supported by equity should be embedded in the learning. In this way, learners develop an understanding of how rights are related to all aspects of RSE and contribute to the freedom, dignity, well-being and safety of all people. This also helps learners to understand the importance of equity, recognising the importance of rights in ensuring fair treatment for all.'

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Is there evidence that the organisation who created the resource recognises and values children and young people's rights, especially those relating to sex, gender and sexuality?

Key UNCRC RSE rights to look for include:

- the right to non-discrimination (article 2),
- the right to an identity (article 8)
- the right to be heard and involved in decision-making (article 12),
- the right to access information that will allow children to make decisions about health and well-being (article 17),
- the right to experience the highest attainable health, access to health facilities, preventative health care, and family planning education and services (article 24)
- the right to government protection from sexual abuse and exploitation (article 34).

All RSE resources should recognise children and young people's right to information and should be free from discrimination and harm.

Does the resource or organisation address equity and power?

As well as recognising that children, young people and adults have rights, does the resource also consider how social inequalities and inequities prevent people from realising their rights? For example, harmful gender norms and inequities can make it difficult for girls and LGBTQ+ youth to realise their rights to relax and play or to protect them from discrimination or sexual abuse.

LGBTQ+ INCLUSIVE

'In line with the mandatory requirements of the RSE Code, RSE will be realised in a way that is inclusive in accordance with the principles of equality. This helps ensure that all learners can see themselves, their families, their communities and each other reflected across the curriculum and can learn to value difference and diversity as a source of strength. This contributes to a cohesive, fair and equitable society that equips learners with skills for life. This of course includes gender equity and LGBTQ+ inclusivity.'

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Is the resource or organisation inclusive of LGBTQ+ communities?

When looking at resources, think about the images, stories, case studies and other content included. For example, make sure that the images included in the resource show a range of relationships, families and identities. If a resource is not inclusive can it be changed or adapted?

If you are unsure if an organisation is LGBTQ+ inclusive, it's a good idea to ask beforehand.

Remember that the aim of LGBTQ+ inclusive RSE is not merely to include *LGBTQ+* communities but to normalise and mainstream LGBTQ+ lives and communities.

Does the resource reproduce stereotypes about LGBTQ communities?

If you are unsure what stereotypes to look out for, ask your school activist groups or student council to do an audit of the resource for you with support from members of staff.

Does the resource celebrate and value the achievements of people from diverse communities?

A resource needs to go beyond diverse representation and help learners to understand the *value* of difference and diversity.

Is the resource also inclusive of different communities with respect to race, ethnicity and disability?

Again, think about the images, stories, case studies and other content included.

ITERATIVE AND PROVIDED ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

"RSE is a broad, interdisciplinary and complex area that includes biological, social, psychological, spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions. This means that each Area of the curriculum and the range of subject disciplines within them each have a unique contribution to learning in RSE. RSE should draw on all Areas to allow learners to make connections between their learning in RSE and the wider curriculum, understanding historical, cultural, geographic, physical, political, social and technological perspectives and influences on RSE issues. This also helps avoid a 'single issue' approach where each lesson covers a different RSE issue, isolated from other learning".

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you already mapped RSE across all Areas of Learning and Experience?

Before looking at which resources to use, first map what RSE is already being delivered across all AoLEs. Try getting your staff team together to do this so that you can get a clear picture of what is happening across all year groups and disciplines.

MIND THE GAP: Mapping RSE across the curriculum

Which ***thematic areas*** do you currently explore across the six areas of learning and experience (AOLE)? Use this quick mapping chart to help you audit what you already offer, and how, and note down ideas (possibilities and challenges) for future provision.

	Expressive Arts	Health and Well-being	Maths and Numeracy	Humanities	Language, Literacy and Communication	Science and technology	Whole school environment
Relationships and Identity							
Sexual Health and Well-being							
Empowerment, Safety and Support							

Go to the section **"Making the RSE CODE Matter"** for full details of the content for each theme, for each phase.

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This will help you to map the gaps and identify where you need new resources. The ***MIND THE GAP*** tool on page 139 of this resource will help you do this.

Is the resource or organisation holistic in its approach?

For example, does the resource include different approaches to the topic / theme? (e.g. a mixture of historical, cultural, creative, biological, spiritual, psychological approaches)?

If not, can it be combined with a suite of resources to achieve this? To do this, you may need to use resources that are not usually labelled as 'RSE resources' such as poems, art works, adverts, news stories, research statistics, policy documents, oral histories etc.

RELEVANT, RESPONSIVE AND DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE

"Schools should include learners' perspectives to ensure relevant and responsive RSE and provide increasing opportunities for learners to help direct their learning as they progress. Learners' views about what, how and where they learn should be taken into consideration so that the RSE curriculum can truly reflect the experiences that children and young people encounter in society".

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you carried out a creative audit to help you listen and attune to the needs, experiences and questions of your learners?

Before you start to look for RSE resources you need to first conduct an audit or review of your current provision and to ask learners what they want and need to learn about. This will help you to tune into your learners' needs and experiences and ensure that your curriculum is developmentally appropriate. See ***page 140*** for more information and ideas on how to conduct a creative audit.

Once you have conducted your creative audit, you will be in a position to consider whether the resource or organisation you are considering will help you to address and respond to the needs, experiences and questions that you have identified through the creative audit process.

The creative audit: towards a co-produced and empowering RSE

Why a creative audit?

Making Darta

What IARS you about RSE in your school?

Run/jewey ideas for a rights-respecting school

What needs to stop or start to make RSE better in your school?

Use these questions to guide you:

- Will the resource or organisation help you to respond to a question, need or experience identified through the creative audit? Or can it be adapted to help you do this?
- Is the resource or organisation's work appropriate to the needs of your learners in terms of the language, images and approach? Is the resource differentiated for learners with SEND or can you differentiate the learning yourself?
- Will all your learners see themselves reflected in the resource? Will they also see people, communities and experiences that are different to their own and that may help them to imagine other ways of being in the world?
- Has the resource been co-produced with children and young people? If not, has it been tried, tested and evaluated with young people? (nb. Article 12 of the UNCRC is about children's rights to an opinion and for their opinions to be listened to and taken seriously.)
- Does the resource or workshop include a reflective or evaluative activity? Or can you include one to ensure you get feedback from children and young people?
- If you or a colleague have used the resource before what feedback did you receive from children and young people? Do any changes need to be made to the resource or to how you use it?

POSITIVE, PROTECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE RSE

"Schools should look to create safe and supportive learning environments. These help create trust and allow learners a safe space to consider learning, ask questions and express their thoughts and feelings. Practitioners should seek to present learning around RSE issues positively and meaningfully. While understanding risks and harm is an important aspect of RSE, using these as the focus for teaching about RSE issues, or focusing mainly on the negative aspects of RSE is likely to be ineffective or harmful".

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Does the resource or organisation include activities to help create a safe learning environment?

For example, have you created a classroom charter, set of ground rules or support principles. If not, can you combine the resource with other activities to help you do this first? Or request that an organisation includes this in their work?

Does the resource contain activities that encourage children and young people to share their thoughts, feelings and questions in safe ways?

For example, consider sharing things anonymously, using creative methods, historical objects, case studies and other distancing techniques.

Does the resource or organisation use affirmative and empowering images, messages and other content?

Some resources are designed to explore difficult issues such as violence, abuse and discrimination. As outlined above, it is important that resources tackling sensitive issues also include content about rights, empowerment and positive change. Otherwise, the resource can end up unwittingly reinforcing narratives that victimise or shame particular groups or communities.

Does the resource or organisation aim to empower children and young people or inspire positive social change?

Some resources are designed to explore difficult issues such as violence, abuse and discrimination. It is important that resources tackling sensitive issues also include content about rights, empowerment and positive change. Otherwise, the resource can end up unwittingly reinforcing narratives that victimise or shame particular groups or communities. Does the resource include ideas and activities to engage children and young people in social action or activism? Or does it include stories about how individuals or communities have addressed particular issues and brought about positive change? Does the resource or organisation use affirmative and empowering images, messages and other content? (see ***www.agendaonline.co.uk*** for ethical and affirmative ways to explore and represent sensitive issues with children and young people).

Is the resource or organisation factually accurate and up-to-date? Does the resource include research and evidence to support any claims that it makes?

All resources should be research-informed, and include links or references to the research or evidence that backs up any claims that it makes. Have a look and consider which organisation carried out the research, their aims and objects and the size of the sample used. Research with a small sample (i.e. a small number of participants) is still useful and valuable but should not be used to make any broad, generalised claims. See Welsh Government's guidance on using evidence and expertise.

INFORMED AND SUPPORTED BY PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

"Professional learning is a key requirement for the realisation of high-quality RSE, and should occur at a school, cluster, regional and national level. The senior leadership in schools should ensure that all practitioners contribute to the school's RSE priorities, either through the whole-school approach, the cross-cutting element or the essential learning. Schools and settings should facilitate all practitioners' access to professional learning that can support them to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills in RSE."

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

Have you completed a creative audit with staff to assess their knowledge, confidence and skills?

Before you start selecting and using resources, it is a good idea to carry out a creative audit with staff, as well as learners. This will help to identify good practice as well as staff concerns, anxieties and gaps in knowledge and practice. Use this process to identify professional learning needs across the school to help you start to plan future learning opportunities.

Based on what you have learnt from your creative audit, will all staff using the resource be confident and able to use the resource or will they need additional support?

It may be that the resource is not appropriate for some staff to use. If this is the case, you may need to find an alternative resource or consider what support staff need moving forwards so that they can access the resources. For example, peer-teaching, peer-observation, RSE staff drop-in sessions, internal training, externally provided training.

Will there be an opportunity for staff to read and try out the resource with each other and ask questions or raise concerns?

E.g. at an RSE drop-in session for staff.

Does the resource support staff to engage children and young people in discussions and respond to emerging questions?

Look for useful 'points to consider', discussion points or sample answers that staff can draw on to give them the confidence to lead discussions and respond to questions. If the resource does not provide this, can you create something like this as a staff team? You may also find it useful to have an anonymous questions box in the school where staff can place any questions that they find hard to answer. Make sure you have a clear process for reading and responding to all questions asked.

How can external organisations help support the professional development of staff in schools?

Remember that the role of external organisations is to *enhance* and not *replace* the teaching of RSE in schools. When inviting organisations to deliver workshops for young people in your setting, always consider how they can contribute to staff learning and development too. Can staff observe sessions? Can organisations offer a staff debrief at the end of the day? Can they signpost or share useful resources to help staff address questions and curiosities that may arise from the workshop?

ENGAGING WITH LEARNERS, PARENTS, CARERS, AND WIDER COMMUNITIES

"Schools and settings should have clear lines of communication in relation to RSE and should engage with learners, parents, carers and the wider community, offering them the opportunity to engage with learning and teaching in RSE. Communicating effectively with parents and carers on an ongoing basis is an important way to foster positive relationships in order to engage them in purposeful and meaningful dialogue. When undertaken well, this can help aid learner progression by helping parents and carers to understand how they can support learning within and outside the school environment. Schools' curricula should also recognise and reflect the needs and contexts of the communities within and beyond the school."

(RSE Statutory Guidance, Welsh Government 2022)

How will the resource or organisation help you engage with learners?

For example:

- Does the resource or organisation use interactive, creative and engaging learning techniques?
- Does the resource or organisation create opportunities to listen to children and young people's questions and concerns and respond to their experiences?
- Does the resource or organisation create opportunities for children to share their learning and experiences with other young people? E.g. through creating artwork or other artefacts / digital materials that can be shared with others, through enabling children and young people to speak out through campaigns, assemblies or other forms of activism.

Have you carried out a create audit with parents or started to engage parents in your RSE curriculum in some way?

See ***page 140*** of this resource for ideas about how to do this.

How will the resource or organisation help you engage with parents and carers?

For example:

- Does the resource or organisation have materials that can be shared with parents so that they are aware and informed about the learning that will take place? If not, can you create these as a staff team or RSE working group?
- Does the resource or organisation have materials for parents to support their own learning about RSE topics?
- Does the resource or organisation encourage children and young people to start conversations about their learning at home? E.g. through creating badges, stickers or other materials that they can take home to raise awareness of RSE issues and start conversations - where appropriate.
- Does the organisation offer workshops for parents as well as learners? Or is this something you can host as a school?

What materials can you create from using the resource / working with the organisation that can be shared with parents either digitally (e.g. via social media or newsletters) or at school events / parents evenings etc.?

How will the resource or organisation help you engage with the wider community?

For example:

- Does the resource / organisation help support learning about your local community and how it can support young people to access advice and information about RSE topics?
- Does the resource / organisation support children and young people to engage in community work and advocacy in relation to RSE?
- Can community organisations be invited in to contribute to sessions you are running or can you visit relevant community sites? (e.g. sexual health clinics, youth and community centres, arts centres etc)

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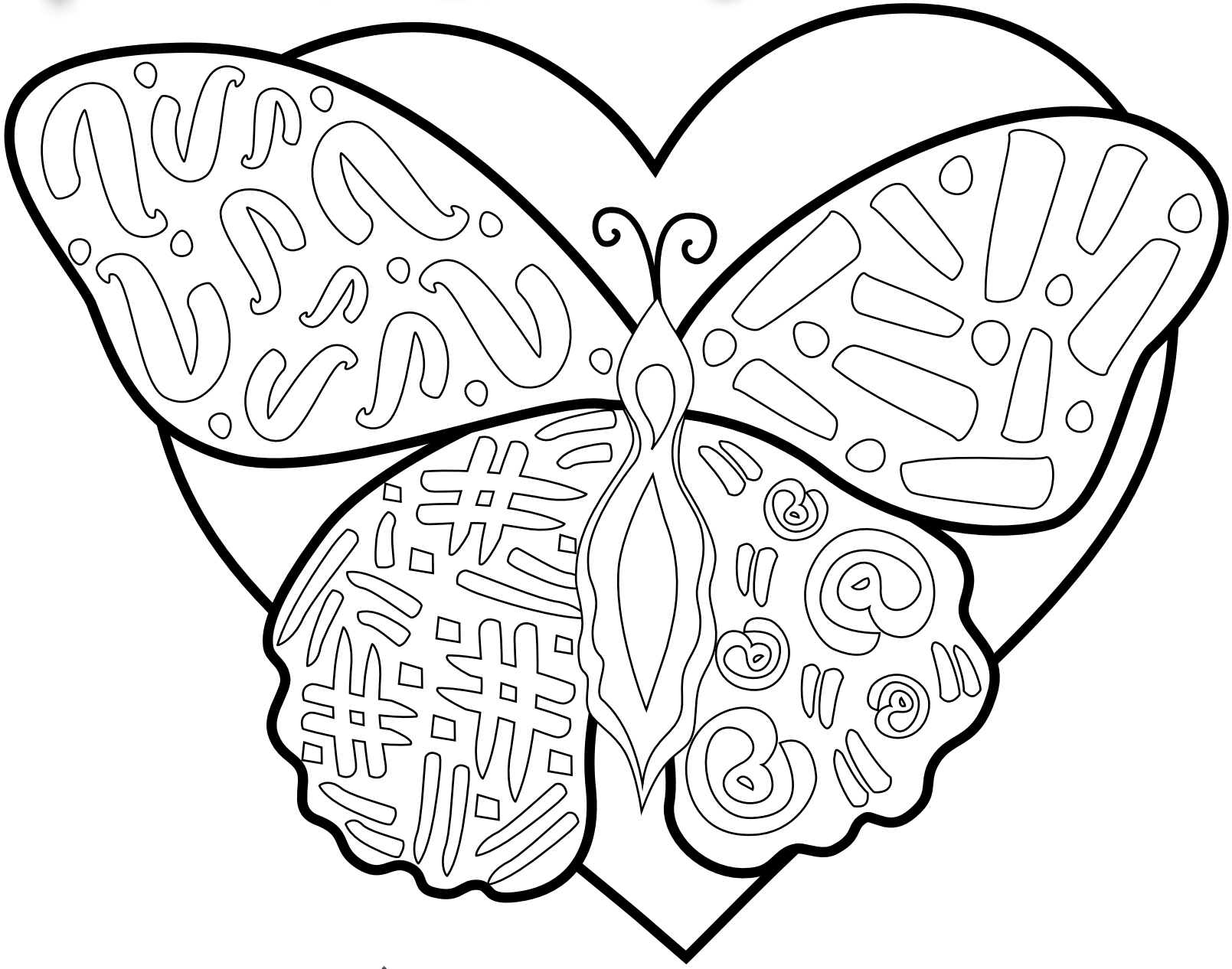

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