

EAST RENFREWSHIRE LNCT AGREEMENT

Good Practice Guidelines for Schools in the Delivery of Personal and Social Development (Education) (PSD(E), Education for Citizenship or other Cross Curricular Initiatives in Secondary Schools

November 2007



Education Department

Good Practice Guidelines for Schools in the Delivery of Personal and Social Development (Education) (PSD(E), Education for Citizenship or other Cross Curricular Initiatives in Secondary Schools

1. PSD(E) should comprise planned and well resourced provision to promote the personal and social development, health and well-being of pupils. It makes an essential contribution to meeting the need for schools to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life. Such provision may be through timetabled PSD(E) lessons, opportunities in other subjects, off-timetable events and special projects etc. This means that PSD(E) can and often does involve a significant number of staff, therefore effective coordination is essential.
2. PSD(E) should feature strongly in all school development plans. Most secondary schools allow about 50 minutes per week for discrete provision.
3. PSD (E) can be effective in enabling pupils to explore attitudes and values, behaviour and relationships when well planned by teachers who have received appropriate training. It can be less effective if teachers are untrained in its use. These good practice guidelines advocate that appropriate training is put in place at school, local authority and national level so that teachers feel confident in the delivery of PSD(E) topics.
4. Although there is some excellent practice, the picture is less positive in a number of schools where PSD(E) frequently remains a low status curriculum area. There is a need for secondary PSD(E) coordinators with sufficient seniority to lead the management of PSD(E) within a school.
5. PSD(E) coordinators need to provide good leadership and in the best examples in secondary schools, coordinators are increasingly effective in promoting partnerships with organisations and agencies in the local community.
6. There is a need to coordinate the opportunities for PSD(E) provision in other subjects and to monitor and evaluate PSD(E) wherever and however it is provided. Monitoring and evaluation is a responsibility for a member or members of the school senior management team. Coordination of PSD(E) would be part of the agreed job description of a designated promoted member or members of staff.
7. Confusion about the distinction between PSD(E) and Education for Citizenship is common. There is a need to stress that while both promote pupils' personal and social development and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life, they have different emphases and learning outcomes. PSD(E) focuses on the personal and social aspects of a topic or issue, whereas Education for Citizenship addresses both the public and political.
8. In Scotland, the favoured model for the delivery of education for citizenship in schools is one of permeation and this should also be the practice in East Renfrewshire secondary schools.
9. The quality of teaching by specialist teachers is often considerably better than that of non-specialists. While there are many teachers who enthusiastically provide effective PSD(E) lessons, in many schools the experience of some pupils is negative, giving rise to a feeling amongst pupils that PSD(E) is irrelevant and unimportant. The education authority should support the provision of a recognised post graduate national qualification for teachers to enhance PSD(E) provision in schools. The education authority will also promote and support quality continuing professional development at national, local and school level in general and specifically where it arises from the professional review and development process.

10. A positive development is the increasing number of secondary schools seeking to involve pupils in aspects of decision making about PSD(E). This is an important development; pupils themselves say that they want the opportunity to be involved in defining and guiding the curriculum and there is a need to ensure that PSD(E) provision meets the specific needs of pupils in individual schools. Pupils appreciate active approaches to learning and value carefully negotiated and consistently applied ground rules. The involvement of pupils in decision-making about the PSD(E) curriculum is important to the development and review process. It is one of the ways that schools can ensure that the curriculum has relevance for their pupils and that they can review its effectiveness.

11. Assessment in PSD(E) in most schools is non-existent or weak. Where it is present there is often too much emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and not enough on the development of skills and exploration of attitudes and values. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in PSD(E) are often lower than in other subjects. There is a need to raise expectations and to provide an opportunity to assess pupils' progress and achievement. National guidance on these matters should be forthcoming from the Scottish Qualifications Authority along with exemplification of standards. Teachers will require preparation time to take on board the workload involved.

12. PSD(E) at all stages provides explicit opportunities for pupils to develop good relationships and understand the differences between people. Many schools are using these opportunities to enable pupils to explore attitudes and develop understanding of diversity including cultural, racial and religious difference. PSD(E) thus makes an explicit contribution to inclusion through its content. The specific content of PSD(E) courses should address the needs and priorities of the pupils in the individual school community. This means that it should reflect local issues and concerns such as those revealed by statistics on drug and alcohol use or rates of teenaged pregnancy, school issues such as dealing with bullying or promoting understanding about racial and cultural diversity in schools where pupils may not have the opportunity to experience it first hand. It should also reflect the views of pupils themselves. The General Teaching Council (Scotland) standard for teachers recognises the contribution that every teacher can make to this agenda.

13. At all stages there are opportunities to make stronger connections between subjects that promote health and well-being, for example, PSE, Science, PE and Design Technology.

14. Where national initiatives to promote positive behaviour and attendance are clearly aligned with PSD(E), at both education authority and school level, they are likely to benefit provision and are less likely to be perceived as additional workload by teachers.

15. The majority of PSD(E) coordinators in secondary schools provide effective leadership. Coordinators should undertake most or all of the lesson planning and the production of teaching materials for those teaching PSD(E). PSD(E) Coordinators across the authority should meet regularly and share best practice in terms of resources and provision for teacher training. The newly formed PSD(E) Secondary Forum should make this agenda a key priority. The group should consider making recommendations in relation to the PSD(E) curriculum at the various stages, developing / commissioning materials for specific topics where the existing provision is in need of being improved or updated. It is noted that helpful materials have been made available through "Curriculinks" (staff only) in relation to both the 5-14 and 14+ curriculum.

16. In the best models of provision it is essential that teachers should feel confident in delivering PSD(E). To teach PSD(E) effectively teachers need to have the necessary knowledge, skills and enthusiasm and their need for ongoing training and support should be met by schools and the education authority. Training should be appropriate to ensure that teachers become familiar and confident with the materials they are delivering to pupils. Training should take account of the content of the topics, class sizes and differentiation in relation to teaching and learning. Schools should also work towards formative assessment

approaches being a natural part of course delivery. Training needs to be regular and re-visited as the content in PSD(E) courses frequently changes to take account of new situations and change in methodology e.g. bullying in a new technology context, latest research findings re. the effectiveness of drugs education etc.

17. Where resources allow, the timetabling of smaller classes for PSD(E) is desirable, given the nature of the subject content and the teaching approaches being encouraged.

18. As the curriculum is reviewed in relation to "A Curriculum for Excellence" all subjects may make a much more realistic and meaningful contribution to PSD(E).

19. PSD(E) is most effective when teaching and learning approaches provide opportunities for pupils to explore and discuss issues that concern them, and where they are able to develop and practice personal and social skills and explore the varying attitudes they may encounter currently and in the future.

20. Currently there are areas where many teachers report a lack of confidence in approaches to teaching topics in PSD(E), for example:

sex education
teaching about relationships
drugs education

21. School Coordinators should make every effort to involve promoted pupil support staff and outside agencies, where appropriate and where deemed to be able to make a worthwhile contribution to the delivery of these topics. No teacher lacking in confidence or expertise should be expected to deliver these particular topics to pupils.

22. In terms of Education for Citizenship, teachers often feel least confident in political literacy, democracy, local democracy or other topics related to politics and government. Time for staff to research and become confident with new content, school based, local authority or national training could all contribute to providing appropriate support for classroom teachers.

23. Most schools coordinate different components of provision that is labeled PSD(E). This may consist of discrete timetabled PSD(E) lessons, tutorial time and off-timetabled activities such as health awareness days and permeation throughout the curriculum. In addition, community projects and work experience are identified by many schools as part of PSD(E) provision.

CONCLUSION

The LNCT commends these good practice guidelines to secondary schools and recommends that they inform the arrangements for the delivery of PSD(E), Education for Citizenship and other cross curricular initiatives in secondary schools.

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