

Why teach children and young people about Community Cohesion and the Prevention of Violent Extremism?

We teach children and young people about CC and PVE because we want to make a difference to learners. In and out of school life, children and young people live, interact and work in communities that are diverse in terms of cultures, religions or beliefs, ethnicities and social backgrounds. We use the *school* community as a platform to provide meaningful interactions between pupils, staff, families and the local community and create opportunities to mix with, and learn with and from people from this wide range of backgrounds. The school community creates an open and safe climate for different learning experiences, and facilitates equal educational opportunities for children and young people regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances.

By providing equal learning opportunities, stimulating and encouraging learners to explore their own identity, discuss ideas, form educated views and address sensitive and controversial issues, they will become active participants in building and promoting their own spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development. This positive teaching and learning environment also helps pupils learn to understand and value diversity, challenge assumptions and build resilience to the messages of violent extremists.

Teachers can help to break down barriers, reduce ignorance and prejudice and empower learners to engage with and be committed to their community – be it their school, local, national or international community. By creating a positive school ethos, accentuating inclusion and interaction, children and young people will not only influence and participate in decision making but will understand the impact of their decision making on others and take responsibility for their actions. In effect, children and young people will develop the skills and knowledge to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens, achieve their aims in a positive and conducive way and ultimately achieve their full potential in later life.